

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 379 447

CE 068 247

AUTHOR Goozee, G.
TITLE The Development of TAFE^{*} in Australia. An Historical Perspective.
INSTITUTION National Centre for Vocational Education Research, Leabrook (Australia).
SPONS AGENCY New South Wales TAFE Commission, St. Leonards (Australia).
REPORT NO ISBN-0-86397-031-1
PUB DATE 93
NOTE 184p.
AVAILABLE FROM National Centre for Vocational Education Research, Ltd., 252 Kensington Road, Leabrook, South Australia 5068, Australia.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Books (010)
EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Educational Change; *Educational Development; *Educational History; *Educational Policy; Federal Government; Foreign Countries; *Government Role; Labor Force Development; Postsecondary Education; Productivity; State Government; *Technical Education; *Vocational Education
IDENTIFIERS *TAFE (Australia)

ABSTRACT

Over the past 20 years, the increasing level of Commonwealth Government intervention in Technical and Further Education (TAFE) policies and programs has had a tremendous impact. The focus of these policies and interrelationships between the Commonwealth and states has changed from a humanistic to an economic and industrial relations approach. The Kangan report on TAFE in Australia, subsequent establishment of the TAFE Commission, and provision of Commonwealth funding in the 1970s had a dramatic effect on technical education in all states. Technical education under its new name TAFE has been recognized nationally as a distinct identity within the education spectrum. Both the quality and quantity of TAFE provision could be raised. For the first time, the Commonwealth has intervened in TAFE policy and practice. This last development has had a significant impact on TAFE over the past 15 years. Although in some respects it has resulted in a more national approach to TAFE, it still has not resulted in a standard structure or organization. The history of TAFE shows that the structures that have developed have been very closely related to the economic, geographic, and demographic needs and characteristics of each state and territory. The problems that governments need to resolve in the future and that will require the involvement of TAFE are high levels of unemployment and the need to improve productivity in industry. (References are listed at the end of each section.) (YLB)

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The development of TAFE in Australia

G GOOZEE

An historical perspective

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G GOOZEE

An historical perspective

This publication was partly funded
by the NSW TAFE Commission

Adelaide 1993



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A.C.N. 007 967 311

Single copies may be made by TAFE authorities without restriction.

ISBN 0 86397 031 1
TD/TNC: 35.13

Published by:
National Centre for Vocational Education Research Ltd
252 Kensington Road,
LEABROOK SA 5068

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1 Introduction

Technical and Further Education (TAFE) is the largest sector of post-secondary education in Australia. TAFE courses are provided by eight different State and Territory authorities of widely varying size and character. Each has developed its own distinctive system with unique characteristics of scale of operation, relevance to a local industrial base, the geographic spread of population and the demographic characteristics of local populations. In Australia the TAFE sector is responsible for vocational education at preparatory, operator, trade, technician and, in some fields, professional levels.

The two decades from 1970 to 1990 have seen a remarkable change in both the size and nature of TAFE in Australia. During this period, TAFE has developed into a very large and complex sector of education. Enrolments have increased from just over 400 000 in 1970 to over one million in 1991. This represents roughly 70 per cent of all tertiary education students in Australia. Although still the responsibility of State and Territory governments, the past two decades have seen TAFE develop a national focus. The past 20 years have also seen the increasing politicisation of TAFE as increasingly it has been used by both Commonwealth and State governments as a major vehicle for economic and social change. However, despite the growth of TAFE in both size and importance over the past two decades, there has been very little material published documenting the significant changes that have occurred, and there has been very little analysis of why these changes have occurred.

TAFE systems have a number of characteristics which distinguish them from other sectors of education. An important feature is the geographical spread of TAFE colleges, with 225 major institutions and over 750 associated centres Australia wide. TAFE also offers an extremely wide range of courses which provide education and training for employment at the operative, trade and paraprofessional levels as well as general

education and literacy programs. New South Wales TAFE, for example, offers over 1400 different courses. A major difference between TAFE and higher education institutions is the diversity of course durations, which range from a few hours for refresher courses to two or three years for associate diploma and diploma courses. Consequently there is a wide range of credentials which includes statements of attainment, certificates, advanced certificates, associate diplomas and diplomas.

Another characteristic of TAFE is the variety of attendance patterns. Unlike higher education which has a large full-time student population, just over 90 per cent of TAFE students attend part-time or study externally, combining work and study. Part-time attendance can include attendance either during the day or in the evening, by block release or through open learning courses. Attendance can be full-time for all or part of a year or for several days or hours per week. Increasingly TAFE is looking at taking courses to the student either through use of technology or by providing programs at the workplace.

The characteristics of TAFE students are also different from higher education students. TAFE provides education and training for a very wide age range of students and has a higher proportion of students from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

Another significant difference between TAFE and other sectors of education is that, in line with the strong vocational content of TAFE courses, most TAFE teachers are recruited from industry and provided with teacher education. TAFE has also developed close links with unions and industry and many of its courses are included as a requirement in industrial awards and for licensing purposes. Trade courses historically have been a very important part of TAFE's charter and in recent times, through industrial award restructuring, other levels of training are also being included in industrial awards.

Unlike universities, which are autonomous institutions, most TAFE systems originated and developed as parts of government departments. This has meant that as well as being educational institutions, they have had to operate

within a public administration framework. Even Victoria and South Australia, which started with, and have retained, autonomous technical education colleges, are now expected to implement government policies and priorities. This has meant that technical education has operated in a much more political climate than universities, particularly over the past 20 years when TAFE has been expected to implement both Commonwealth and State government economic, social justice and education policies.

TAFE in Australia has always been the responsibility of State and colonial governments. Although State technical education institutions had common origins, they all developed their own individual structures as a result of the different social, economic, demographic, geographic and political characteristics of each State. As well, as King points out, 'major differences between the states appear to have arisen from the accidents of history which at critical times have brought forward men of influence in different states.'¹ As he says, there is no simple explanation of the fact that in Victoria and South Australia, technical education institutions have survived relatively independent of government control (at least until the 1970s), nor is it possible to understand, without reference to history, the emergence in New South Wales, of a separate Department of Technical Education.

The year 1889 can be considered to be a significant timeline in the development of technical education as by this date most of the structures and the frameworks for future development had been established. The differences in structures and administration between States was very closely related to the economic, geographic and demographic differences between them. The Schools of Mines were established and survived in Victorian country towns because the skill requirements and wealth of the local economies and the size of the local populations were large enough to keep the student population viable. New South Wales had a much larger number of smaller communities spread over a much greater geographic area, and the contrasts of a developing secondary-industry economic base in the three major metropolitan centres of Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong and a primary-industry base outside these centres. Government involvement in technical

education commenced in 1882 with the establishment of a Board of Technical Education. When this was abolished in 1888, responsibility for technical education passed to the Department of Public Instruction. The centralised system was essential for the provision of technical education in country areas which would not have been able to support viable autonomous colleges. It is no coincidence that both Queensland and Western Australia which had similar problems of scale, both adopted a similar centralised structure.

Commonwealth involvement in education in Australia was minimal until the 1940s. In 1901, the Australian Constitution provided a formal division of powers between the Commonwealth and the States. The Commonwealth powers were set out in considerable detail whilst the States retained 'residual powers'. Federation gave the Commonwealth Government no direct role in education which continued to be accepted as a State responsibility. When New South Wales transferred land to the Commonwealth in 1911 for the establishment of the Australian Capital Territory, the New South Wales Government agreed to be responsible for education in the Territory. It was not until the 1920s that the Commonwealth started having some involvement in the provision of education in the Australian Capital Territory.

In 1943, the Commonwealth Government established the Walker Committee to 'consider the general problem of the co-ordination of the various activities of the Commonwealth within the education field'.² This committee played a very important role in education as it began the Commonwealth's deliberate move into the long-established area of State responsibility for education. The committee's final report analysed the relations between the Commonwealth and the States on educational matters and concluded that the Commonwealth had a definite responsibility to provide facilities that were essential for the accomplishment of its own tasks, if these facilities could not be readily provided by the States. The report suggested that the main Commonwealth interests in educational developments in the States would be in the re-establishment of armed forces personnel; education for industrial development and rural industries; scientific

education and training of research workers; health; adult education; and equality of educational opportunity through the payment of allowances to students. The main conclusion of the committee was that there was an urgent need for the establishment of permanent machinery for the development and execution of Commonwealth education policy.

By 1949 the Commonwealth had implemented a number of the Walker Committee's recommendations. The Commonwealth Office of Education was created within the framework of the Department of Post-war Reconstruction on 8 November 1945. The functions of the office in terms of the Education Act 1945 were to advise the minister on matters relating to education, including the granting of financial assistance to the States; to liaise on education matters with the States and overseas; to undertake research and to provide statistics and information.³ As well, the Universities Commission had been created, the Australian National University had been established and the post-war educational program for returned servicemen and women had been developed and implemented. However, although the war years saw the Commonwealth Government start to take an active role in education through these initiatives, its interest in technical education virtually died at the end of the war.

As Smart points out, in the 1950s to 1970s, there was a hierarchical pattern of the Commonwealth's entry into involvement in education and the use of committees of inquiry and advisory committees to facilitate it. Thus intervention began at the top of the pyramid with the Murray Report on Universities and the creation of the Universities Commission. This was followed by the Martin Report which led to the creation of Colleges of Advanced Education, and by the Commission of Advanced Education and the Karmel Report (1973) which led to the establishment of the Schools Commission. Unfortunately for technical education, it did not appear to be considered to be part of the education sector until increasing pressure in the early 1970s forced the Labor Government to establish a committee to look at its funding needs.

The history of technical education up to the early 1970s, when it acquired its new name TAFE, shows a sector of

education which although fulfilling a crucial role in providing post-secondary education and training for large numbers of people, was consistently under-valued and under-resourced. The development of technical education has not been consistent but characterised by periods of rapid change followed by much longer periods of neglect. Thus, technical education has usually tended to prosper during times of national crises such as world wars and economic depressions when adequate funding has been provided for both buildings and increased enrolments. For example, in the 1930s, while technical education, along with other forms of education, suffered financially in the early part of the depression, by the middle of that decade there were insistent demands for an expansion of technical education to alleviate the problem of unemployed youth. This led, among other provisions, to the establishment of day training classes for unemployed youth and for some Commonwealth funds to be provided to the States for this purpose. Similarly in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, both Commonwealth and State governments have provided funds and programs aimed at alleviating the problems of the high levels of unemployment of young people.

Perhaps part of the problem faced by technical education in establishing its position in the education spectrum prior to the 1970s, was the lack of a clear identity and charter. In part, this is probably the result of the wide range of courses and awards and, in part, a result of the diversity of structures across Australia. To some extent, technical education in Australia had to be self-defining and it therefore lacked the immediate recognition of roles and structures that characterised both the school and higher education sectors.

The inclusion of technical education as a sub-section of departments of education tended to restrict development as generally, first priority in funding was given to schools and technical education continued to be starved of funds. It was not until the Commonwealth Government commenced providing designated grants to TAFE systems in the 1970s, that those States that still had technical education as part of their departments of education started expanding and upgrading their facilities.

The difficulty in establishing a clear charter for technical education has also been exacerbated by the question of status of awards. Throughout its history, there has been conflict between technical education and the other sectors of education, particularly universities, about what has been an appropriate role. Professional associations have had a significant influence on which institution should provide the professional education and training for their members. For example, in the 1890s and early 1900s there was constant friction between Sydney Technical College and Sydney University over who should offer what course. Following the establishment, by legislation, of registration boards for occupations such as dentistry and pharmacy, the criteria for registration were established as degrees, rather than the traditional technical education diplomas and the courses were consequently moved to the university. A similar process occurred with veterinary science and all engineering courses, with the exception of sanitary engineering, which was deemed to be more appropriate for a technical college than a university. The history of technical education in New South Wales in particular, is one where the top levels of technical education courses have been continually creamed off by higher education institutions and subsequently upgraded to degrees, usually at the request of the relevant professional body. The perceived need to upgrade the status of a profession in the eyes of the community, by requiring a degree as the entry criterion, has not only under-valued TAFE credentials but has also exacerbated the difficulties TAFE has had in creating and maintaining a clear identity.

In the British tradition, universities have been regarded as having a distinct role from other tertiary institutions. Although there has been continuing argument as to the precise nature of this role, and although it can be demonstrated that the universities of the 1990s in both Britain and Australia differ significantly in many respects from the universities of the 1850s, there is still a belief that the fundamental role of the universities has not changed and is still the same as articulated by Ashby in 1946:

Here is the criterion for determining what subject or parts of a subject should be taught at a university. If the subject lends itself to

disinterested thinking; if generalisation can be extracted from it; if it can be advanced by research; if in brief, it breeds ideas in the mind, then the subject is appropriate for a university. If, on the other hand, the subject borrows all its principles from an older study (as journalism does from literature, or salesmanship from psychology, or massage from anatomy and physiology) and does not lead to generalisation, then the subject is not a proper one for a university. Let it be taught somewhere by all means. It is important that there should be opportunities for training in it. But it is a technique, not an exercise for maintaining intellectual health; and the place for technique is a technical college.⁴

Although today universities now teach journalism and marketing, there is still a belief that there is a fundamental difference in the level and type of education provided by universities and technical and further education in that university education involves higher cognitive skills and a more theoretical approach and so is more valuable than the more applied approach taken by technical education. This view was expressed in the Murray report in 1957, when the committee saw a great danger that:

... a technical college, or another institution of a similar type, which is performing excellently its proper function of producing the technicians and craftsmen for whom there is an urgent national need, may be led by a false sense of values to try its hand at producing another type, the professional engineer or technologist and so lessen its effectiveness for its own particular task.⁵

The Kangan report on TAFE in Australia⁶, the subsequent establishment of the Technical and Further Education Commission and the provision of Commonwealth funding in the 1970s had a dramatic effect on technical education in all states. It meant that technical education under its new name TAFE, was recognised nationally as a distinct identity within the education spectrum. It meant that both the quality and quantity of TAFE provision could be raised. However, it

also meant that, for the first time, the Commonwealth was intervening in TAFE policy and practice. This last development has had a significant impact on TAFE over the past 15 years. Although in some respects it has resulted in a more national approach to TAFE, it still has not resulted in a standard structure or organisation. The history of TAFE shows that the structures that have developed have been very closely related to the economic, geographic and demographic needs and characteristics of each state and territory. Even today, when faced with similar State and National political imperatives, individual State TAFE systems have responded in ways that have maintained their historical roots.

The application of the 'economic rationalism' approach to education in recent years has led to criticisms of the Kangan philosophy and a tendency to accuse TAFE of trying to be 'all things to all people'. This criticism is generally based on the view that by providing a wide variety of vocational, basic and further education courses, TAFE is not meeting industry's needs and that the idea of 'open access' has led to organisational growth at the expense of appropriateness of provision. The 1990 Scott Review of New South Wales TAFE, for example, said that the Kangan report spawned:

... an ethos of TAFE becoming all things to all people—emphasising the importance of individual skill development—to the detriment, arguably, of industry and national needs.⁷

What this and other similar comments tend to overlook is the fact that ever since its inception, TAFE has been expected to fill all the educational and training gaps. At the end of the last century and the beginning of this century, most technical education systems provided 'continuation' courses for post-primary students. This role was relinquished only when secondary schools were established. In Western Australia, Perth Technical College provided not only continuation courses but also university courses under licence from the University of Adelaide until the University of Western Australia was established. In times of war, TAFE has been expected to train both service personnel and the civilian population. In times of economic depression, TAFE has been

expected to run ameliorative programs for the unemployed. When New South Wales TAFE lost its diploma courses to the University of New South Wales, with the subsequent upgrading of them to degree courses, TAFE then developed certificate courses to fill the gap created for training for paraprofessional occupations. Today TAFE is expected to provide the vocational education and training needs created by industrial award restructuring, the need to improve the skills level of the labour force and the entry-level vocational education and training requirements of 15-19 year olds. Whilst the other two sectors of education have clearly defined roles, the schools by age and the universities by awards, TAFE throughout its long history has been required to fill all the other educational needs of the community and industry.

In researching this topic, it became clear that despite the major changes that have occurred in TAFE over the past two decades, particularly its growth and its emergence as a major part of the tertiary education sector, there was very little documentation of the development of TAFE during this period, let alone any analysis of what changes have occurred and the reasons for change. This is particularly noticeable when comparing the lack of information on TAFE with the vast amount written and published on schools and higher education institutions. The literature review provided some useful historical sources but revealed only limited documentation of the changes that have occurred in TAFE since the Kangan Report in 1974. The main sources of information have therefore been government reports, departmental annual reports and interviews with people who were involved in many of the major events during this period. Clarification of structural changes within TAFE systems was obtained from individual officers within these systems.

This study is essentially a history of TAFE policy and administrative arrangements at both State and Commonwealth levels. It focusses on the developments that have occurred within TAFE over the past two decades and identifies the political, economic and social influences that have led to change. Perhaps one of the greatest changes that has occurred over the past two decades, has been the 'politicisation' of TAFE. As

mentioned earlier, unlike higher education, TAFE is both a government instrumentality as well as an educational institution. Therefore, it is more immediately involved in the political processes and more susceptible to ministerial intervention, both at State and Commonwealth levels. A feature of the past 20 years has been the increasing involvement of governments in the policies and operations of TAFE and the increasing use of this sector of education as a vehicle for implementing governments' political agendas. This has not only led to constant changes in TAFE's structures and educational profile but has also led to increased tensions between State and Commonwealth governments. There has also been a major ideological shift, with the Kangan report's emphasis on the vocational education needs of the individual falling into disrepute and the industrial relations and needs of industry becoming the driving forces in the 1990s.

The main themes of the following chapters are the impact of the increasing level of Commonwealth Government intervention in TAFE policies and programs, the inter-relationship between the Commonwealth and States over the past 20 years and the change in focus of these policies and interrelationships from a humanistic approach to an economic and industrial relations approach. The period from 1986 to date has been one of rapid and constant change and has resulted in major restructuring of TAFE systems and a deluge of Commonwealth Government reports and policies. This study concludes with a discussion of current issues impacting on TAFE and a view of the future based on the lessons from the past.

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2 The Whitlam years 1972-1975

2.1 Australia in the early 1970s

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, there were a number of significant economic and social changes which lead to a radical political change that had a dramatic effect on TAFE. During the 1950s and 1960s, Australia was 'what it had always been—a dependent capitalist economy with income levels that geography had decided would be among the highest in the world'.¹ During this period, the Menzies coalition government stood on two basic policy planks, economic growth and anti-communism. As Catley² points out, the basis for the long post-war boom was laid under American auspices during the period of post-war reconstruction. This was the result of the establishment of freer world trade in commodities and capital. During the 1960s, there was a boom period, marked by the inflow of foreign capital. Some of this was deposited for speculative purposes in the belief that the Australian currency was temporarily undervalued. The part of the inflow that had augmented the private capital stock had increasingly been directed into new mining ventures in Western Australia and Queensland. This meant the most dynamic and profitable areas of the economy were now largely foreign owned. This inflow of foreign capital undoubtedly contributed to the onset of inflation in 1970-71. The economy was also affected by the government's loss of control over wage fixation in 1969 and the increasing questioning of the tariff system. Between 1969 and 1971 there was an accelerated rate of inflation, a rise in import prices and an increase in unemployment.

There were also significant changes to the labour force during this period. The immigration policy of the 1950s and 1960s led to a substantial increase in the country's net gains of immigrants, particularly those who were assisted in their passage to Australia because they possessed skills that were in short supply. In the 1960s, the numbers of new participants to the labour force

increased as those born in the post-war baby boom came of working age. During the late 1960s, the number of women in the labour force also increased. This meant that the rate of growth in the labour force was considerably higher than the rate of growth of the total population.⁵

The 1960s and early 1970s were also years of great social change in Australia with a new social ideology developing as a multiplicity of social groups sought equality of status. The Vietnam moratorium movement was an 'instructive model for protest for a large number of unappreciated Australians, among them Aborigines, women's groups, ecologists and those previously lacking an outlet for their grievances'.⁶ It was therefore not surprising that the late 1960s and early 1970s saw the emergence of alternative movements. The formation of a Homosexual Reform Society and women's liberation groups in 1969 were indicative of the new forces emerging within society that were changing traditional attitudes and mores. These changes in attitudes fostered an increase in concern for specific groups within the community and groups such as Aborigines and ethnic groups were recognised as suffering from disadvantage. There was therefore pressure on education systems to reflect the new ideologies. In 1969, the National Union of Australian University Students launched a campaign 'aimed at making the existence of inequalities in education a public issue'⁶ and to further this campaign their education officer, Tom Roper, wrote *The Myth of Equality* in which he identified no less than ten groups suffering from inequalities.

At the beginning of the 1970s, the political situation was stagnant as the coalition government had been in office for a long time and did not appear to be adjusting to the changing economic and social environment. It was within this context of increasing economic problems, growth in the labour force and changing community attitudes that the Labor Party came to power in 1972 and its political platform, particularly its educational policies, reflected the economic and social attitudes of the day. The first priority of the new government was social justice.

2.2 Pressures for change to technical education

By the beginning of the 1970s, pressure for improved financial provision for technical education was growing. During the 1960s the Commonwealth had progressively become involved in funding of schools and higher education. Technical education was increasingly being recognised as 'the cinderella' of education and the time was ripe for change. The advent of the Labor Government in 1972 was the beginning of two decades of change.

During the 1950s and 1960s, the Australian Education Council (AEC), made a number of calls for Commonwealth financial assistance for technical education. However, these were superseded by moves to gain financial assistance in schools.

New South Wales continued to press for assistance for technical education and in 1961 it prepared a statement on the conditions and needs, which it claimed were representative of the Australian experience. The statement, and supporting arguments were forwarded to the Prime Minister. He in turn submitted it to the Martin Committee for consideration. Although initially this statement did not have the imprimatur of the AEC, it did become the operational basis for *The Case for Commonwealth Aid to Technical Education*, prepared by the AEC in 1963-64.

The release of the Martin report in 1965, effectively concluded attempts by the AEC to obtain Commonwealth financial support for technical education although concern was expressed by the AEC to State premiers that:

... the definition of tertiary education employed by the Commonwealth excludes from consideration technician or certificate courses which have entry requirements below the completion of high school but which advance into tertiary level. In view of the vital necessity to increase the number of technicians in the community, the Commonwealth is requested to give further

consideration to providing matching funds on recurrent expenditure for those parts of courses which are beyond the completion of a full high school course, even though entry is made at an earlier stage.⁶

The other major lobby groups at the national level during the 1960s were the Australian Teachers' Federation (ATF) and the Technical and Further Education Teachers' Association of Australia (TAFETAA). From the time of its establishment in 1964, TAFETAA had taken annual requests to the Commonwealth Government for a national inquiry into technical education. Successive Liberal Government ministers for education responded to these requests by restating the Liberal Party policy which was that the primary responsibility for education rests with the States.⁷ This view was in direct contrast to the Labor Party view that the Commonwealth Government had a central role to play in education. However, despite the Labor Party's platform to improve education, technical education initially received only cursory attention.

A report that also added to the pressure for change in technical education was the report of the Australian Tripartite Mission to Study Methods of Training Skilled Workers in Europe (the Tregellis report)⁸. The main purpose of the tripartite mission was to investigate the methods of training skilled workers in Europe in order to provide a basis for revising the criteria for the selection overseas and the recognition in Australia, of migrant tradesmen coming within the scope of the 'Tradesmen's Rights Regulation Act'. However, the mission's report did make a number of recommendations for improving training within Australia. The report warned against relying on migration to overcome the shortage of skilled labour and the need to take steps within Australia to update training methods. The report also pointed out that of all the advanced industrialised countries, Australia remained the only country where there was no general co-ordination of training on a national basis to ensure a uniformity of training methods, a uniformity of standards and a common acceptance of qualifications. It suggested there was a need for increased funding for industrial training, as the provision of adequate vocational training was extremely costly and, in

Australia, the amounts devoted to technical education were small compared to the expenditure on general and tertiary education. It also stated that the system of technical teacher training should be given more attention. Following the release of the report, the Ministers of Labour Conference (MOLAC) supported increased Commonwealth involvement in the financing of technical education and noted the small amount spent by both the Commonwealth and the States on technical education as compared to the amount spent on the other sectors of education.

When the Labor Party came to power in 1972, it moved quickly to establish advisory commissions for pre-schooling (the Children's Commission) and primary and secondary education (the Australian Schools Commission). The establishment of these commissions drew the attention of the new minister for education, Mr Kim Beazley, to the fact that there were 400 000 students who would not come under the jurisdiction of the Schools Commission or the Commission on Advanced Education or the Universities Commission.

In 1973, following this discovery, there were a number of factors which concentrated the government's attention on technical education. In January 1973, the TAFETAA held its annual conference in Adelaide and resolved once again to request the Commonwealth Government to hold a national inquiry into technical education. There was also mounting public pressure towards gearing educational courses towards national employment which led to an expression of anti-university, anti-college and pro-technical education and training sentiments in public debate.⁹ Following the TAFETAA conference, a delegation met with Mr Beazley and this proved to be the catalyst for the Labor Government to mount a formal inquiry into technical education. This decision was strongly supported by the minister for labour and immigration, Clyde Cameron, who believed that there was a need for a commission on technical and further education to enable the technical education systems to play a greater role in the creation and upgrading of the labour force. It was Clyde Cameron who nominated Myer Kangan, then deputy secretary of his department, to head the national inquiry.

It has been said that the Australian Committee on Technical and Further Education (ACOTAFE) 'arose by default',¹⁰ as is demonstrated by the nature of the committee's brief, which was in effect to pick up the loose ends of education not covered by the other commissions. Ford sees the process of development of the committee as having 'its roots in an historical neglect of this sector since the Murray report ushered in an era of elitism in post-secondary education in Australia.'¹¹ However, although it had taken a long time for technical education to have government attention focussed on it, and although the processes in achieving this may have been long drawn out and disjointed, the establishment of ACOTAFE marked the start of 20 years of dramatic change.

2.3 The Kangan committee

The appointment of the Australian Committee on Technical and Further Education (ACOTAFE) was announced by the Commonwealth Minister for Education on 26 April 1973. The committee was to be chaired by Myer Kangan and the ten other members included representatives from business, the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), State technical education systems and higher education. The terms of reference of the Committee read as follows:

The Committee will furnish information and advice to the Minister for Education on matters relating to the development of technical and further education in Australia including financial assistance to the States in relation to institutions in the States. That information and advice will include:

- (a) *priorities within needs and appropriate measures to be undertaken by the Australian Government;*
- (b) *the amount and allocation of financial assistance;*
- (c) *the conditions upon which assistance should be granted.*

In carrying out its task the Committee will take into account:

- (a) the promotion of the vigorous and well balanced development of technical and further education throughout Australia;*
- (b) overall manpower policy and national and local occupational requirements;*
- (c) the emerging needs of industry, commerce and governments as they adjust to technological, economic and social change;*
- (d) community attitudes and the needs and aspirations of individuals seeking to undertake courses in technical and further education;*
- (e) the optimum use of resources.*

For the purposes of the Committee, technical and further education is defined as the post school education (other than that conducted by institutions supported by the Australian Universities Commission and the Australian Commission on Advanced Education) conducted by institutions administered or maintained by a government education authority. The Committee will not be concerned with grants for training within industry.¹²

The very broad definition of TAFE and the wide ambit of the terms of reference permitted the committee to create its own boundaries and set its own agendas. The impact of the Tregellis report is also identifiable in the inclusion in the terms of reference of manpower planning needs. An important part of the Labor Party platform of 1971 had been to promote equality, by which was meant 'equality of opportunity', particularly in education, health and welfare. This aim is reflected in the terms of reference and was seen as a major part of the committee's brief.

ACOTAFE held its first meeting on 25 May 1973 and subsequently met 12 times in full committee. There were a number of visits to the States and a comprehensive survey of technical college institutions was undertaken. This was of particular importance as it was the first time that a national profile of TAFE had been attempted. This profile not only provided an invaluable overview of the

sector but also set a benchmark against which later developments and achievements could be measured.

Although there were significant differences in structures between the States, there was commonality in the types of courses offered and student attendance patterns. Unlike universities, technical colleges had a very large proportion of part-time students. In New South Wales, for example, only 5.8 per cent of students in 1970, attended full-time. Other States had similar attendance patterns. This meant that the courses were very highly vocationally and occupationally orientated and that the characteristics of technical education students were very different from the younger, full-time students of other tertiary education institutions.

The results of the survey and the documentation of both the structure and scope of TAFE revealed not only the diversity of structures and size of the system, but also revealed the poverty of the system and the lack of adequate student support services, particularly in the areas of student counselling and library services. The survey and submissions to the committee also highlighted the lack of formal arrangements at national level, particularly for exchange of manpower planning information and national standards for course accreditation.

2.4 ACOTAFE recommendations

On the 5 April 1974, ACOTAFE presented a two-volume report to the Minister for Education. In presenting its conclusions and recommendations, ACOTAFE also provided a definition of technical and further education. This was that:

... technical and further education should be regarded as describing all organised and sustained programs designed to communicate vocationally oriented knowledge and to develop the individual's understanding and skills. It should include all programs of education with a vocational purpose, other than those financially supported by other Commissions, whether the

*individual is using the program with employment as a primary aim or with the aim of gaining specialised knowledge or skills for personal enrichment or job improvement. It includes what is usually known as 'adult education'. It does not include activities which have no direct educational purpose and which are not planned as a systematic sequence.*¹³

The report pointed out that technical and further education had too often been thought of as something different from a tidy mainstream of education—primary, secondary and tertiary—and should be regarded as an alternative, neither inferior nor superior, to the other streams of education.

The recommendations in the report were based on the premise that a technical and further education commission would be established similar to the Universities, Advanced Education and Schools Commissions and therefore were framed in terms of what actions should be undertaken by the new commission. The report recommended a shift in emphasis from that of seeing the prime purpose of technical education as being to anticipate and meet the vocational needs of the community, to the International Labour Office (ILO), UNESCO and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) views of meeting 'the needs of the individual person who wishes, within the limits of his capacity, to develop his ability to the best advantage of himself and the community, including industry and commerce.'¹⁴ The report stressed that this was only a shift in emphasis and the realities of job opportunities, the continuing expanding demand for skilled manpower and the relevance of courses to the actual content of occupations must, nevertheless, remain the context for the type of education offered in technical colleges. The concept of recurrent education was seen as an important component of this process as it 'offers the best hope whereby the community can cope with shifting job specifications resulting from technological and social change and especially with new employment opportunities which open up.'¹⁵

The other major theme was that of access to TAFE. Although acknowledging that access to technical education was less difficult than to many other forms of post-school education because of the wide range of courses, entry requirements and attendance patterns, the report stated that there were still a number of barriers to overcome. Therefore it was recommended that strong emphasis should be placed on unrestricted access to recurrent education and colleges should extend preparatory courses, transfer courses and other help to allow adults to attempt the level of vocational education they desired. Groups that were identified as being particularly disadvantaged and requiring specific assistance were women, Aborigines, those who resided outside metropolitan areas and the disabled.

The report also drew attention to the physical facilities in many colleges. These recalled outmoded attitudes in industry and the consequences of years of insufficient finances, which had left colleges unable to provide adequately for the growing demand for class accommodation and for back-up resources essential for planning future development and keeping existing educational facilities up to date. These facilities referred not just to physical facilities but also to course content, libraries, research and in-service education for staff.

The detailed recommendations of the committee related mainly to grants to be made by the Commonwealth Government to the States for both recurrent expenditure and capital works which would be channelled through the commission to the States. As fees had been abolished, it was proposed that \$20 million should be available for distribution among the States as fees reimbursement grants. It was also recommended that \$9.8 million should be made available for distribution among the States as a general purpose recurrent expenditure grant and a further \$9.8 million should be available as specific purpose grants. These included special purpose grants for:

- curriculum research and development;
- training of specialist staff for libraries, library resource materials and equipment;
- publicity measures to raise public awareness of TAFE;

- counselling services;
- the establishment of units to undertake capital works planning and statistical collections;
- grants to develop facilities to further the concept of recurrent education and unrestricted access to vocationally orientated education.

Particular attention was given to the establishment of library resource centres and it was also recommended that an Australian TAFE technology centre be established for the purposes of adapting technology to vocational education and of researching, developing and producing learning and other educational aids. This latter was one of the few recommendations that was not implemented at this time. It took another eight years and two reports before a National TAFE Centre for Research and Development was established.

A major emphasis of the report was the need for grants for capital purposes. The committee estimated that a total capital expenditure of \$1000 million was required to do all that needed to be done by the end of the 1980s to give TAFE the status it should have and bring it within access of all who could benefit.¹⁶ The report also stated that whatever limitation the existing economic situation placed on funds for education should be shared by other streams of education, and priority for expenditure should not be less than that accorded universities, colleges of advanced education and schools. The capital grants proposed were both matched and unmatched grants for equipment and minor works, land and buildings, student housing and library resources centres. Although the grants that were approved were less than those proposed, they were sufficient to transform TAFE.

In line with a recommendation that the Australian Commission on Advanced Education and the proposed Australian Commission on Technical and Further Education arrange a special inquiry into initial teacher education, a Committee on Technical Teacher Education (COTTE), was jointly established by the two commissions. It made a number of recommendations on measures to improve technical teacher education but like a number of other reports delivered in 1975, was shelved due to changing economic circumstances. However, in 1976 the Technical and Further Education Commission (TAFEC) commissioned another investigation into TAFE

teacher education. This is discussed in the following chapter.

The Kangan committee's report was tabled in Parliament on 10 April 1974. The minister for education, Mr. Beazley, summed it up in his tabling speech as follows:

The Report envisages a major shift of emphasis. It abandons the narrow and rigid concept that technical colleges exist simply to meet the manpower needs of industry, and adopts a broader concept that they exist to meet the needs of people as individuals ... The Report takes a long step in the direction of lifelong education and of opportunities for re-entry to education. It recommends unrestricted access for adults to vocationally orientated education.¹⁷

The release of the report was followed by the double dissolution of Parliament in May 1974 and no decisions were announced until September 1974. The recommendations for funding were cut, particularly the capital works proposals. Although the States Grants (Technical and Further Education) Act 1974 was supposed to operate from 1 June 1974, in practice, the enabling legislation was not carried until nearly six months later. The second ACOTAFE report,¹⁸ was released in May 1975 and recommended Commonwealth grants in the order of \$493 million of which \$282 million was for capital works purposes. It also proposed a development program for the next decade. Unfortunately the release of this report coincided with the onset of an economic recession, and the competing demands for funds from the other commissions, and so its recommendations were never implemented. The Technical and Further Education Act was assented to in May 1975 and this Act provided for a Technical and Education Commission. This was chaired by Mr H K Coughlan with Professor E Richardson as deputy (both full-time members) and ten part-time members.

TAFE in Australia was very lucky that ACOTAFE was chaired by a person like Myer Kangan who had both vision and dedication. Although Kangan was supposed to be replaced in his department, the appointment of his successor was delayed, and for some months he was not

only chairing the committee but also still carrying out the duties of deputy secretary. According to Peter Fleming, a member of ACOTAFE, TAFEC and the TAFE Council of CTEC, Myer Kangan was always able to keep the big picture in view, always knew exactly where he was going and always had the framework of the report in his head. It was unfortunate that the pressures of the inquiry led to ill health and that he was unable to participate in the preparation of the second report.

The significance of the Kangan report should not be under-estimated. For the first time technical education, under its new name TAFE, was given a status and a charter which gave it a recognised place within the education sector. Although in recent years the Kangan philosophy has been criticised as being 'all things to all people,' the Kangan definition still has not been replaced by anything better. As Ryan points out, the Kangan report also provided TAFE with an ideology

... one which dismissed crude distinctions between technical and humane studies, discounted a narrow vocationalism as TAFE's sole charter, asserted its equality of esteem with other educational sectors as well as its distinctive character and especially stressed the role of TAFE in providing access by all to post-secondary education.¹⁸

The acceptance of the report also gave TAFE access to Commonwealth funds for both recurrent purposes and for capital works. The transformation of TAFE would not have been possible without the influx of Commonwealth funding for new buildings, staff development, libraries, curriculum development and research.

Last, but certainly not least, the Kangan report provided the impetus for the development of a national identity for TAFE and put TAFE on the national agenda. Although TAFE remained the responsibility of State governments, the injection of Commonwealth funding and the establishment of national bodies such as the Australian Commission on Technical and Further Education and later the Commonwealth Tertiary

Education Commission led to the development of national TAFE policies and standards.

2.5 The significance of the Whitlam years for TAFE

Although of all the Labor Government reforms, the Kangan report had the greatest impact on TAFE, there were a number of other initiatives which also affected it. For Whitlam, 'the most enduring single achievement of [his] government was the transformation of education in Australia'.²⁰ He saw education as 'the great instrument for the promotion of equality'²¹ and he and his government were well aware that Australia had fallen behind many other countries in the proportion of Gross National Product (GNP) spent on education. The first task of the interim Schools Commission, established in December 1972, was to chart the inequalities in the Australian education system. Its report confirmed that children of Aborigines, migrants and the working class in general, stood less chance than the rest of the community of enjoying schooling of a quality which would equalise their opportunities in life. In order to redress this situation, the Schools Commission was given a mandate for remedial action.

Two other measures introduced to help overcome inequality of opportunity were the abolition of fees and the replacement of competitive schemes of tertiary scholarships by non-competitive, means-tested grants. Both these initiatives had a considerable impact on TAFE, not just in increasing participation levels but also affecting the characteristics of the student population. The new student assistance scheme was initially known as the Tertiary Allowances Scheme and with the passing of the Student Assistance Act of 1973, was changed to the Tertiary Education Assistance Scheme (TEAS). These means-tested grants were available to all university and advanced education students and to TAFE students who were enrolled in approved courses. In 1975, another scheme, the Adult Secondary Education Allowance Scheme (ASEAS) was introduced to provide grants, similar to TEAS, to mature students undertaking full-time matriculation courses. To be eligible, students had

to be 19 years of age or older and to have had a substantial break from secondary schooling.

However, although TEAS was an improvement for TAFE students, it still did not provide equality with university and advanced education students. There were certain categories of TAFE full-time students who were specifically excluded (e.g. those in the Stream 5 classification of preparatory courses) and the incidentals allowance for textbooks and other course materials was much lower for TAFE students than for other tertiary students. However, despite this anomaly, both the abolition of fees and the introduction of the new student assistance schemes supported the Kangan report recommendations for improving access to tertiary education and expanding the provision of full-time courses in TAFE by removing financial barriers to access. The effects of these can be seen in the increase in TAFE enrolments from 400 700 in 1973 to 671 013 in 1975, a 59 per cent increase.

In line with its policy of improving education, the new Labor Government divided the Department of Education and Science into two separate departments and extended their roles. The education policy and program functions for which the new department became responsible included administering student assistance programs, education research and information services, Aboriginal education, migrant education, international education activities, education in the Australian Capital Territory and administering the Northern Territory education system. A migrant education branch of the department was created in 1975 following the transfer of functions from the former Department of Immigration. Between 1973 and the end of 1975, departmental staff had increased from 1795 to 7957 positions (including those in State offices) which gives an indication of the expanding role of the Commonwealth in Australian education.²²

Another new initiative was the establishment of a National Training Council (NTC) in 1973. This replaced the former national steering committee on training for industry and commerce. Tripartite (government, union and employer) industry training committees were progressively established under the NTC to cover particular industry sectors, with the objective of

developing systematic training practices within those industries.

In 1973, Mr Clyde Cameron appointed a Committee of Inquiry into Labour Market Training (chaired by Mr D Cochrane) to report to the minister on:

- the role that training should play in an active manpower policy;
- the extent to which opportunities for training and retraining should be provided or improved;
- the broad methods of training and retraining that should be used;
- the rationalisation of existing schemes of training and retraining.

The committee reported back in May 1974²¹, a month after the Kangan report. Its main recommendations were for the introduction of procedures for collecting labour market information and rationalisation of labour market training assistance through the establishment of one comprehensive labour market training scheme. It also proposed the introduction of group apprenticeship schemes, the development of measures to overcome the restrictions preventing the access of adults to the skilled trades and the optimum use of the facilities of existing educational institutions.

Although little mention is made of TAFE in the report, possibly because the committee was working concurrently with the Kangan committee, there was consistency in both reports in the need to improve labour force skills, the need for improved labour market information and planning and the need to provide assistance to disadvantaged groups within the community. The Cochrane report also led to the introduction of the National Employment and Training Scheme (NEAT). Under this scheme, assistance was provided to eligible trainees undertaking on-the-job, full-time or part-time training for skills in demand on the labour market. Employers providing on-the-job training received subsidies equal to 37.5 per cent of the adult award wage or 27.5 per cent for junior trainees. At approximately the same time, the National Apprentice Assistance Scheme (NAAS) was introduced to rationalise and extend the provisions for trade training. A major

objective was to increase the flow of apprentices by providing subsidies to employers willing to take on additional apprentices. These developments were complemented by the establishment of the Regional Employment Development (RED) scheme in 1974 which was designed to encourage locally-initiated, labour-intensive projects of a socially useful or economically viable nature in areas of high unemployment.

The Labor Government also instigated searches for alternative avenues to higher education and was very interested in the British Open University. A committee was established under the auspices of the Universities Commission, to look at the feasibility of establishing an open university in Australia. However, the commission instead recommended that a non-teaching open tertiary education body be established.²⁴ This project was abandoned as financial problems were becoming increasingly evident and projections from the Borrie report on population suggested that existing institutions would have difficulty maintaining their levels of enrolment.

Another government report which had a considerable impact on TAFE, although not specifically directed at it, was the Schools Commission Report, *Girls, School and Society*.²⁵ This study was undertaken as:

The position of women in Australian society and the influence of education in perpetuating or challenging their inferior status have become important issues in Australia ... The questions now being raised are both broader and more fundamental than those about length of schooling and subject and occupational choice which were the preoccupation of the few studies relating to the education of girls in the past. They include such matters but go beyond them to social arrangements and differing perceptions of possibilities among boys and girls, and how those arrangements and perceptions arise.²⁶

The report pointed out that less than one-third of students studying for qualifications at post-school level were female and that there was a disparity between the sexes in participation in industrial and technical training.

This type of training strongly attracted boys who left school before completing a full secondary course. Girls were more likely to drop out of schooling altogether. It was also pointed out that despite their greatly increased participation in paid work, women workers remained strongly concentrated in traditional female occupations and that educational opportunities for women re-entering the workforce were still very limited.

Although the recommendations in the report were directed at the school system, TAFE systems took note and great emphasis was placed on increasing participation of women in TAFE courses and in trying to encourage women into non-traditional occupational areas. Other social changes which also impacted indirectly on educational systems were the progress made on removing discriminatory practices against women, the major shift in policy towards multiculturalism and moves to improve the lot of Aborigines. The major reforms made regarding women, were the appointment of a special advisor on women's affairs, the removal by State and federal public services of discriminatory practices against women and the granting of the full adult minimum wage to women in May 1974. The concept of multiculturalism, taken 'as indicating that ethnic diversity should be preferred to the old concept of assimilation to an Anglo-Australian ideal'²⁷ was assisted by the improvement of facilities for the schooling of migrant children and the establishment of ethnic radio stations in Sydney and Melbourne. The aim of the Labor Party's Aboriginal policy was:

... to restore to the Aboriginal people of Australia their lost power of self-determination in economic, social and political affairs [so that they could take up] as a distinctive and honoured component in the Australian society the position to which their rights as the first Australians entitled them.²⁸

Many changes were carried out in health, education, housing and other spheres of Aboriginal life. For example, Aboriginal employment and training assistance was expanded and between 1973 and 1974, the number of full-time specialists in the area in the Department of Labour more than doubled to nearly 100. However, although the reforms resulted in the diverse Aboriginal

communities achieving a group identity for the first time, Whitlam's aim of achieving self-determination for Aborigines was not accomplished.

Although the Labor Government ceased to exist after 11 November 1975, in its brief time in government it introduced wide-ranging social and educational changes. Through the two reports on TAFE and the establishment of the Technical and Further Education Commission, it had laid the groundwork for the development of TAFE as an identifiable part of the education spectrum over the next two decades. With the Kangan report having set the agenda for change, the next 15 years were characterised by growth in the TAFE systems, development of national policies and structures and the development of tensions between the Commonwealth and States over policies, processes and funding.

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3 Commonwealth policy directions 1976-1982

3.1 The Fraser Government's policies

The Australian economy, like other Western economies, had experienced 'stagflation' from 1974. As Head¹ points out, however, underlying most of the economic fluctuations of the 1970s and 1980s were important processes of structural change. In looking back, it is clear that Australia's weak manufacturing sector had already peaked in terms of its relative contribution to employment and to national product by the time the Liberal Government was defeated in 1972. The minerals boom of the late 1960s and 1970s had seemed an answer to Australia's chronic balance of payments problems but provided little impetus to economic diversification or to high-technology manufacturing and research. The Fraser Government achieved its electoral successes in 1975 and 1976 against 'the memory of the previous Labor Government's apparent inability to deal with the problems of stagflation'.²

When the Fraser Government came to power, it inherited an economy which was beginning to show some recovery and was showing some decline in unemployment. Although inflation was still very high, it had receded from its peak level.³ The Fraser Government's economic policy was to institute reductions in real wages, and to cut government spending and borrowing in order to bring inflation down. Thus the Australian economy had to be 'adjusted' to the external realities of international trade competition and the domestic problems of inflation. It was expected that recovery would be gradual and unemployment could not be cut down significantly until inflation was brought under control.

Early in its administration, the Fraser Government was provided with two major reports on Australian social conditions. The first of these was Professor Henderson's

report on Australian poverty⁴ which had been commissioned in 1972 by the McMahon Government and had its scope extended by the Whitlam Government. This report showed a deteriorating situation with nearly 18 per cent of Australian families living either on the margin of poverty or beyond it. The aged, large families and single families were found to be most at risk. The decision to cut back on government spending therefore had significant social implications. The Prime Minister's argument was that the task of government was simply to provide an environment in which individuals could take private action to solve their own problems. This view 'marked a return to the simple faith in the equitable workings of the market system which had characterised the Menzies era'.⁵ The problem with this view, when applied to social welfare was that, as Professor Henderson's report showed, whatever the opportunities in the long economic boom of the 1950s and 1960s, even on a conservative definition of poverty, some 18 per cent of Australians missed out on the general prosperity. This situation became much worse in economic downturns. An unfortunate side effect of this policy was that those, such as the unemployed, were held to be to blame for their situation and during the mid-1970s, the unemployed first gained the title 'dole bludgers' and appeared to be constantly under attack. Public service cutbacks and changes to welfare systems such as social security benefits and Medibank again further disadvantaged the already disadvantaged.

The second major report was that of the Royal Commission on Human Relationships which appeared at the end of 1977.⁶ This inquiry had been personally sponsored by Mr Fraser although during its proceedings, its funding and the time available to it had both been cut down. The findings ran counter to the government's policies of self-help and self-reliance as they recommended that where the family failed in its purpose of providing support, the community (i.e. the government) should assist. The commission also found that there was still inequality among the sexes and in particular, it was harder for women to achieve financial independence and teenage girls were leaving school with much lower self-esteem and educational qualifications than boys.

Although the Liberal Party issued a policy statement on women's issues during 1975, no undertakings were made in this area during the election campaign. On gaining office, the Prime Minister appointed the minister for employment and industrial relations as minister assisting the Prime Minister on women's affairs. The Women's Affairs Branch was upgraded to an Office, and Sarah Dowse, who had worked for Clyde Cameron when he was minister for labour, was appointed to head the office. Largely through her initiatives, women's policy units were established within a number of government departments. However, apart from this, the sole policy initiative during 1976 was the introduction of the family allowances scheme. Under the 'new federalism' policy, responsibility for a number of schemes or policies which directly benefited women in the areas of health, education and social security, were progressively transferred to the States. Almost immediately after the 1977 election, the Prime Minister reduced the status of the Office of Women's Affairs from his own department to a newly created Department of Home Affairs.

As far as education was concerned, 'the Fraser Government was returned to power without an educational programme and without a post-1972 educational philosophy'.⁷ A Liberal-National Country Party document entitled *Education Policy*, which was released in the second half of 1975, stated that the role of the Commonwealth in education was fourfold:

*... first, determining needs and requirements for Federal spending in education and allocating priorities within these requirements; second, coordinating programs in education with other Federal activities and with State Government's and the independent schools system; third, evaluating spending to assess effectiveness; and finally, encouraging research, innovations and experiments in education to meet the changing aspirations of society.*⁸

The document also identified six priorities. These were:

- 1 Widening educational opportunity
- 2 Maintaining and pursuing educational quality and excellence

- 3 *Providing choice in schooling*
- 4 *Encouraging community participation in education*
- 5 *Giving more emphasis to assessment and evaluation of expenditures and programmes*
- 6 *Rationalising administrative arrangements*

The federalist philosophy of the coalition was reflected strongly in the section on administrative arrangements, with emphasis being given to the need for greater Commonwealth-State consultation in education. The Fraser Government hoped to renew State responsibility in public programs through new taxation reimbursements and replacement of much of the specific purpose grants with general reimbursements to the States. What better place to supervise the experiment than in the education portfolio which was an important state function, the area of greatest public outlay by State governments and the showpiece of Labor's domestic activity between 1972 and 1975.⁹ In 1976, guidelines were laid down for the four education commissions which specified a two per cent real growth per annum for schools, advanced education and higher education and a 10 per cent growth for TAFE. Between 1976 and 1982, the Fraser Government succeeded in cutting education expenditure back from nine per cent to seven per cent of total federal outlays.

The Prime Minister, when minister for education, was sympathetic towards TAFE, partly because of its years of neglect but mainly because of its direct involvement with industrial development. Therefore, while the years of the Fraser Government were characterised by cuts, rationalisation and amalgamations in advanced and higher education and a drift in funding away from state schools to private schools, TAFE continued to benefit. This was because it was seen not only to be essential for increasing labour force skills and assisting economic recovery, but was also a means of picking up the casualties from the growth in unemployment and the cutbacks in the social welfare areas. Vocational education and training provided a way in which 'people could take action to solve their own problems'.

3.2 The Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission

In line with the Kangan report recommendations, the Technical Education Commission (TAFEC) was established under the Technical and Further Education Act of 1975. The functions of the commission were to inquire into and to furnish information and advice to the minister with respect to:

- (a) *the general development of technical and further education in Australia;*
- (b) *the desirable standards for buildings, equipment, teaching and other staff and other facilities for TAFE colleges;*
- (c) *matters in connection with the payment of grants to the States for institutions providing technical and further education;*
- (d) *the conditions upon which financial assistance should be given; and*
- (e) *any other matters relating to TAFE which may be referred to the Commission by the Minister or which the Commission feels should be inquired into.¹⁰*

The commission was also asked to co-operate with the other two tertiary commissions in examining the overall provisions of opportunities for post-school education, including the greater rationalisation of the use of resources and the more extensive use of facilities throughout the calendar year.

While in broad terms, TAFEC continued the work of ACOTAFE, different emphases began to emerge. TAFEC was less concerned with defining TAFE and more with obtaining the necessary resources to meet the range of needs that were being identified in TAFE.¹¹ The commission saw as the central objective, the development of TAFE to a position where it could function effectively alongside the other sectors of post-school education in Australia in order to enlarge the scope of opportunities for school leavers and to produce the balance of skills required in the labour force. To be able to do this, it was essential that TAFE have a proper share of the available resources. In its first (and only) report, the commission

set out in detail the extent of the imbalance in the allocation of resources and the reasons why Commonwealth and State governments must accept responsibility to correct this imbalance.

The commission believed that top priority must be given in the 1977-79 triennium to the provision of additional student places in TAFE. This was essential if Australia was to meet the skill requirements of the labour force over the next 25 years. The commission believed that the following decade could be one of continuing labour shortages because, while the supply of labour might be sufficient in level, it was seriously doubted that it would be adequate in composition. In order to avoid this situation remedial action was required on a number of fronts. The female labour supply and demand pattern would need to be reconciled, community commitment to training and retraining fostered and some nexus developed between labour needs and the education system, so that occupational choice was better founded. These themes have been raised continually over the past 15 years in numerous reports and attempts are still being made to achieve these objectives.

TAFEC was also required to make recommendations about funding within government-imposed guidelines and it was under TAFEC that the processes of allocating funds to State TAFE authorities for special and particular purposes was implemented. This process enabled TAFEC to support projects of national importance in TAFE and to set national policy guidelines for the State systems.

The establishment of TAFEC was possibly the catalyst leading to the restructuring of the tertiary commissions.¹² Soon after the election of the Fraser government there were moves to rationalise the three separate tertiary education commissions on the grounds that:

... there was wasteful duplication and overlap, they competed against each other for funds and, most importantly, it became increasingly difficult for federal cabinet to determine policy priorities within the tertiary education arena as a whole.¹³

Between 1975 and 1977, the government considered the establishment of a new national tertiary education advisory body. This was influenced by the government's desire to re-examine the relationship between the Commonwealth and the States. In December 1975, the government appointed an administrative review committee (the Bland committee) to investigate ways of achieving economies in government programs and services and of improving Commonwealth-State administrative arrangements. This was followed by a committee of officials to examine the possibilities for shared funding of education between the Commonwealth and the States. The reports of these committees were not publicly released. The question of funding arrangements for education was also referred to the AEC which decided to reconsider the matter when the report of the Williams Committee of Inquiry into Education and Training became available.

On the basis of these events, the government decided to proceed with the introduction of new arrangements. Therefore, in 1977, the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission (CTEC) was established with terms of reference similar to the Australian Universities Commission and the Advanced Education Commission. The new body consisted of a chairperson and seven commissioners. Following strong lobbying, it was decided to preserve the sectoral identities and three subordinate advisory councils were established. These were the Universities Council, the Advanced Education Council and the Technical and Further Education Council.

CTEC's main role was to ensure the balanced and co-ordinated development of all the nation's tertiary institutions. Thus the role of the commission was to deal with inter-sectoral matters while each council was to provide advice on policy and funding matters for its sector. The major reason for the establishment of CTEC:

... lay in the Commonwealth Government's recognition of the importance of inter-sectoral consultations, its desire to incorporate TAFE within a comprehensive system of tertiary education and above all, in its desire to establish

control and rationalisation over tertiary education as a whole.¹¹

CTEC became very influential in the development of Commonwealth policies, priorities and programs for all sectors of education in Australia. However, as Batrouney¹⁵ points out, the Commonwealth Government exercised a great deal of control over CTEC through the power to establish and amend membership of the commission and its councils; through expansion of their terms of reference, requests for investigations and reports on specific issues and the imposition of additional internal and external processes. The imposition of rolling triennia, financial guidelines and national priorities and the incorporation of the co-ordinating body's processes within the government's budgetary timetable meant the government maintained a high degree of control over the operations of these bodies. The existence of other agencies (e.g. the departments of education and employment and industrial relations) within government which also provided an alternative source of advice was another means of exercising control over CTEC.

3.3 CTEC'S policies for TAFE

As the members of the TAFE Council of CTEC were appointed from TAFEC, it is perhaps not surprising that the policies and priorities advocated in the TAFEC report were supported and continued by CTEC. Of the original eleven members of ACOTAFE, all but three remained as members of TAFEC. The TAFE Council, with a reduced membership of nine, still retained five members who had been members of TAFEC and two members who had been members of ACOTAFE. The commission was also bound by the government guidelines which asked it:

... to pay special attention to the requirements of the technical education sector on the understanding that States will continue to discharge in full their own financial responsibilities in this area.¹⁶

The main policy thrust was stated as being to use Commonwealth funds to supplement the efforts of the

States in increasing the capacity of TAFE to respond to community needs. Within this broad objective, the emphasis was placed on upgrading and expanding the physical capacity of TAFE institutions and on improving the quality of the planning and content of TAFE courses. The priority given to capital works was in recognition of 'the relative neglect that TAFE buildings and equipment have suffered during a period of increasing enrolments.'¹⁷

There were two categories of recurrent grants provided for TAFE that were first introduced following the Kangan report and that were continued by both TAFEC and CTEC. These were the general purpose grant to reimburse the States for the cost of abolishing fees for vocational courses and the group of special purpose grants directed at areas of special need. These areas of special need included most of those identified in the Kangan report plus some others that had emerged as a result of the expansion of TAFE. The main categories were:

- *Curriculum development* both for the development of new courses to meet emerging community needs and for the systematic review of existing courses.
- *The assessment of community needs in TAFE*; the assessment of the best means of providing educational opportunity for individuals and the assessment of industry requirements so as to enhance the match between college-acquired skills and job requirements.
- *The development of self-paced learning*
- *Measures to improve public awareness of TAFE* and to inform the public of TAFE's objectives, range of course offerings and attendance options.
- *Increased provision of preparatory, bridging and supplementary courses* for women seeking to re-enter the workforce, those displaced through technological or structural change and school-leavers whose education and skills were not sufficient to secure employment in a tight labour market.

- Measures to assist *forward planning*, particularly the development of coherent state-wide strategies for development.
- The development and provision of *learning resources* such as curriculum and resource centres.

These priorities were endorsed in the following reports.

One issue that was discussed in the first CTEC report and which became a running theme in following reports, was that of the funding of associate diploma courses. These were Commonwealth funded, and while most were offered by colleges of advanced education, some were still provided by TAFE colleges (mainly in New South Wales). CTEC saw two risks in the Commonwealth continuing to fund middle-level courses in both advanced education and TAFE. The first was that the availability of Commonwealth funding could result in a proliferation of associate diploma courses. The second was that full Commonwealth funding of associate diploma courses and only partial funding of certificate-type middle-level courses could encourage an unnecessary upgrading of certificate courses to associate diploma status. No recommendation was made about how to resolve this dilemma and it continued to be an item for discussion throughout the following decade.

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, the report of the Committee on Technical Teacher Education (COTTE) presented in 1975 was not acted upon and was referred to TAFEC and the Commission of Advanced Education for their joint consideration in connection with reports for the 1977-79 triennium. TAFEC assumed the greater responsibility for following up the work of COTTE and its 1976 report gave notice that it had begun its own investigations into the teacher education needs of TAFE and would report separately to the government on this matter. TAFEC believed that in preparing its report, COTTE had been hampered by both a time constraint and a lack of detailed information on the size and nature of the gaps and deficiencies in TAFE teacher preparation. TAFEC was also concerned about COTTE's acceptance of the status quo and its decision not to concern itself with the content of courses. It therefore asked its staff development sub-committee to obtain the additional

information required to assist the Commonwealth to develop sound funding policies for TAFE teacher education. The report of the sub-committee was completed in 1978.

The main conclusion of the report was that existing approaches to TAFE teacher education in Australia 'bear too heavy an imprint of policies and practices more relevant to the preparation of school teachers'.¹⁸ The committee believed that there was insufficient recognition, in Australia, that the teaching of TAFE students, the majority of whom were adult, part-time and employed, often required different techniques and specialisations. It was also felt that the maturity and experience of TAFE teachers should influence the nature of teacher preparation programs. As was pointed out, TAFE teachers, by virtue of their previous qualifications and work experience did not need to undertake some of the studies designed for inexperienced school-leavers being trained for school teaching. The committee stressed the need for the TAFE and advanced education sectors to work together to devise new administrative and academic models which would provide a more appropriate preparation for teaching in TAFE. The recommendations of the report led to an agreement at both State and Commonwealth levels that all TAFE teachers should undergo initial teacher preparation and colleges of advanced education, in consultation with their state TAFE systems, should start developing programs that were better suited to the needs of TAFE teachers.

The implementation of the recommendations of this report had important results in improving the quality of both the development and delivery of TAFE courses. It also highlighted an important difference between the TAFE and higher education sectors in that TAFE teachers were recruited on the basis of their occupational and industrial experience and provided with formal teaching qualifications whereas academics in higher education were recruited mainly on the basis of their academic qualifications and research experience and were not usually provided with formal teaching skills. The co-ordination mechanisms provided by CTEC made it possible to implement cross-sectoral, Australia-wide changes such as this. It is doubtful that without such a

body, it would have been possible to undertake such a study let alone implement its recommendations.

3.4 Impact of Commonwealth Government policies on TAFE

During the period 1975 to 1982, there were a number of important government reports which both directly and indirectly influenced both the educational philosophy and educational profile of TAFE. In a number of cases the government chose not to implement their recommendations, mainly on the basis of cost during a period when the government was intent on cutting back on public spending. However, as the reports reflected public sentiment and changing social attitudes and educational requirements, many of the directions that were recommended were reflected in changes at State level.

The period 1975 to 1982 marked not only the recognition of TAFE as an important sector of education but there was a growing awareness of TAFE as a vehicle for implementing Commonwealth economic and social policies. This recognition was shown by the increase in funding for TAFE at a time when funding for other sectors was either reduced or held at a 'steady state'.

Although the reports did not have a direct impact on TAFE, because they identified social problems, particularly those of disadvantaged groups, they indirectly influenced provision of programs at State level. Most of these major reports advocated new roles for TAFE in providing remedial and vocational education to redress both the social and economic problems they identified.

Batrouney sums up the major emphases of the Commonwealth co-ordinating bodies during the period 1975 to 1982 as: ACOTAFE laid the conceptual foundations for TAFE; it consciously reflected the emergence of a new national sector of education and it adopted an essentially pro-active approach, initiating development on a number of issues. TAFEC continued and strengthened the emphasis on TAFE as a national

sector of education with national needs and priorities. The emphasis of the TAFE council on matters such as capital programs, improving TAFE's database, staff development etc. showed that it was predominantly concerned with implementation within the constraints imposed by the government.¹⁹

As Robinson²⁰ points out, in a federal system where financial and legislative powers are not matched, CTEC and in particular the TAFE Council had to rely on State administrations to achieve the Commonwealth's objectives, which were stated as being 'to upgrade the role of TAFE in tertiary education, to improve the quality of TAFE and to ensure co-ordination among the Commonwealth and the States'. The council consistently adopted a co-operative approach, always had a State TAFE director, an industry and a TAFE teachers' representative as council members and proved to be a strong advocate in trying to have TAFE recognised as an equal partner within tertiary education. Both TAFEC during its brief life and the TAFE council of CTEC were extremely influential in acquainting successive Commonwealth Governments with the developmental needs of TAFE systems, in securing funds to further the technological, equity and access objectives in TAFE and in addressing the considerable staff preparation, staff development, curriculum development and support service needs of a rapidly growing system. Thus the TAFE council played a very important role in developing and influencing Commonwealth Government policies for TAFE and the consultative and co-operative approach adopted by the TAFE council, ensured that State government policies and priorities were also considered. As early as 1978, the TAFE council was able to quote a number of improvements in TAFE that were directly attributable to the allocation of recurrent grants to the States. As the TEC report to the Tertiary Education Commission states:

- *a substantial induction program for beginning teachers is now offered in all states;*
- *comprehensive staff development programmes are now seen as an essential function by each State TAFE authority;*

- *an expansion of activity in the area of curriculum research and development has occurred in both the development of new courses and the review of existing courses;*
- *there has been an increase in bridging, preparatory and supplementary courses;*
- *counselling and guidance services have improved;*
- *some states have established link programmes with secondary schools; and*
- *in the majority of states there has been a distinct improvement in the number and quality of staff concerned with forward planning and measures to improve the quality of TAFE.⁴¹*

TAFE was lucky that, at a critical time in its development, it had the support of a council which was committed to representing its constituents' interest. Peter Fleming who was on the TAFE council in the late 1970s provides an example of this⁴². The council heard a rumour that the Prime Minister was intending to cut the funding for capital works for TAFE and therefore suggested that he visit a TAFE college to see first hand, what the needs were. The only time available was two to three hours between flights at Melbourne airport. Therefore members of the council arranged for the Prime Minister and the minister for education, Senator Carrick to be met and taken to Footscray Institute. At this time, the advanced education section of the institute was accommodated in a new building and the TAFE section was located in an old milk factory and two Nissan huts next to a railway line. The teachers in the Nissan huts ensured that the Prime Minister was detained there long enough for three trains to pass by, with the result that \$50 million was provided for capital works for the triennium.

However, CTEC was not the only government instrument involved in developing policies and programs that affected TAFE. Other Commonwealth Government departments such as the Department of Education and Youth Affairs, the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations (DEIR) and the Department of

Immigration and Ethnic Affairs (DIEA) had also started becoming involved in educational programs. DEIR started to become increasingly involved in labour market programs, such as the School to Work Transition Program and following the Galbally report, DIEA became involved in funding special English programs in TAFE. As TAFE was still a State responsibility and over 80 per cent of its funding was provided by State governments this started to lead to tensions between the Commonwealth and States.

The Williams report expressed concern about the effects of these programs on TAFE systems and stated:

... to an increasing extent TAFE is involved in or required to complement the economic and social programs of governments. Such programs often introduced at short notice can place heavy demands on the TAFE system.²³

The growth in Commonwealth-funded programs in TAFE, combined with the growth in the number of funding agencies, not only created additional administrative burdens but also educational ones. During this period, there was also the start of the tendency for Commonwealth bodies (particularly DEIR) to develop new programs which were required to be implemented with very short lead times, then to either change the program or withdraw funding. The withdrawal of funding, or the institution of the requirement for States to fund a certain amount of places in order to gain the Commonwealth funds became common with pre-vocational and pre-apprenticeship courses. This became even more prevalent in the 1980s and combined with the constant changes to labour market programs, increased tensions between the States and the Commonwealth.

The period 1975 to 1982 could be summarised as being one of growth for TAFE. The Kangan committee recommendations were implemented and the TAFE council continued to support the need for ongoing capital and recurrent funding for TAFE. In many ways, it could be seen to be the 'golden age' for TAFE as it continued to grow, was held in high esteem by governments and finally acquired an identifiable role in the education

spectrum. It was also a period of increased Commonwealth intervention in TAFE policies and programs as succeeding government inquiries saw TAFE as a vehicle for implementing change.

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4 Changes in TAFE 1976-1982

4.1 Overview

The period from 1976 to 1982 saw immense changes occur in TAFE in all States and Territories. The Kangan report and the major Commonwealth reports had a very influential effect on the educational philosophy and program directions of TAFE systems and the provision of Commonwealth funds made it possible to expand provision and implement new programs. There was a continuing growth in enrolment numbers in all States and Territories and important changes in the TAFE student profile as a result of the improvement in student financial assistance and the targeting of educational programs at disadvantaged groups.

During this period, one State after another set up inquiries into post-secondary education. Common themes in each inquiry were the relationship between the three sectors of post-secondary education, the need to co-ordinate the separate sectors and the desire to try to define TAFE's role and place within tertiary education. In many States, the impetus for these inquiries was the influx of Commonwealth funding specifically for TAFE which meant that TAFE could no longer be ignored. The need to provide triennial planning submissions to the Commonwealth for three sectors of education meant that existing structures and co-ordination mechanisms needed to be reviewed and reformed.

4.2 New South Wales

Changes in technical education actually commenced before the release of the Kangan report. Unlike South Australia which instituted a government inquiry into education as a means of instituting change, in New South Wales the impetus came from within the Department of Technical Education and was embodied in new

legislation. A bill to change the title of the department and the structure of its administration had been under consideration for a number of years and was finally introduced into parliament in September 1974 and the new Act was promulgated in 1975.

The most obvious change achieved by the Act was to alter the name of the Department to the Department of Technical and Further Education. The Act also disbanded the Technical Education Advisory Council and replaced it with the Council of Technical and Further Education and provided for the establishment of college or district councils or committees with advisory and executive powers to be delegated by the minister. The main purpose of these changes was to provide for a greater community and industry involvement in TAFE. It was also envisaged that the administration of the Department would be further decentralised to permit greater flexibility in meeting regional needs for post-secondary education.

As part of this ethos of decentralisation and improving TAFE provision in regional areas, the New South Wales Government took up with great enthusiasm the concept of community colleges espoused in the Fitzgerald report on Education and Poverty and the Dennison report on the Community College Concept which was commissioned as part of the Poverty in Education inquiry. In 1974, the policy and planning committee of the minister for education established a sub-committee to advise on the implications for New South Wales of the concept of community colleges. In October 1975, the committee submitted a preliminary report which made special reference to the possibility of establishing community colleges in the New England and Orana (Dubbo and environs) regions. As the Williams report points out, the basic approach of the committee, which was that community colleges could be developed from existing TAFE facilities, was similar to the approach taken by the Partridge Committee in Western Australia.¹ These recommendations were considered by the New South Wales Government which adopted in principle the concept of community colleges for New South Wales and gave approval for the New England and Orana regions to be the subject of the first in-depth studies of its application. A second committee was established to

establish detailed proposals. The report of this committee was submitted to the education co-ordination committee in May 1977.²

Although the report provided detailed recommendations for the establishment of both colleges, only the recommendations about the Orana College were implemented and these not in their entirety. In 1977, the Department of TAFE implemented a policy of regionalisation through the appointment of regional directors to the Hunter, Illawarra, North Coast, Riverina, New England and Central West regions. The establishment of the Orana Community College, with its administrative centre at Dubbo and campuses at towns like Mudgee, Wellington and Bourke, in practice became the establishment of another TAFE region as it operated in the same way as the other regional centres. The different campuses of the Orana college were still managed by principals and the constituent colleges operated no differently from others in the New South Wales TAFE system.

Another major report that had considerable impact on the administration of the Department of TAFE, was the Review of New South Wales Government Administration (the Wilenski report).³ The review was established to 'inquire into and report upon improvements in the machinery of Government and State Government Administration and to advise on the implementation of such improvements as the Government decides upon.' There were four major themes of the report. The first was that the decision-making processes of New South Wales Government should be ordered so that the elected politicians made the decisions. The second was that there was a need for flexible management and structures so that the administration could respond to changing needs in society. The third was that appointment to and promotion within the administration should be solely on the basis of merit (including the removal of discrimination against groups such as women, migrants and Aborigines). The last was that services should be provided to the public in a way that ensures that those who are entitled to a particular service know about it and have ready access to it.

The Wilenski report had a considerable impact on all government departments. Many of the directions for change were already on TAFE's agenda, for example, regionalisation, devolution of authority and improving services to the public. However the report did hasten the implementation of many of these changes. Perhaps the greatest impact however, was in the areas of policy development and recruitment and promotion procedures. The Wilenski report stated that policy development was initially the responsibility of the public service, that it was not a task that ministers could perform unaided and that the New South Wales administration had responded inadequately to the challenge of policy development. Although the planning areas of New South Wales TAFE had been strengthened following funding by the Commonwealth, the policy areas had been left virtually untouched. The Wilenski report led to this situation changing with a policy unit being established and both policy and planning areas being strengthened. New recruitment and promotion procedures were also introduced to try to ensure that the principle of appointment by merit was enforced.

In 1976, prior to the State election, the Premier announced that the government would legislate for an education commission. In August 1976, the minister for education, Eric Bedford, appointed a working party to draw up recommendations for the establishment of such a commission. Two interim reports were prepared and circulated for public comment, with the final report being presented in April 1978. The second interim report proposed the establishment of a single education commission which would be:

... responsible to the Minister for Education for the development, control and maintenance of the public education services of New South Wales and for the provision of school and technical and further education.⁴

In responding to the interim reports, there were many criticisms of the proposal to establish a single commission. There was particular opposition from TAFE with the director-general, Mr Merv Watson, submitting a minority report. There was also opposition from the Conference of Principals of New South Wales Colleges of

Advanced Education and the New South Wales Vice-Chancellors Committee. The major criticisms of the proposal were that the proposed education commission would concern itself with public educational services of all types and levels in the State and therefore it would be representative of the interests of the schools rather than those of the total education portfolio. There were also concerns that the membership of the commission as proposed, although conceived as a representative body, was inadequately constituted to reflect the wide range of community interest in education. There was also strong and widespread support for TAFE to continue to be separated from the administration of schools. Mr Watson proposed that rather than a single commission, the government should establish two commissions—a State schools commission and a college and universities commission.

The working party finally recommended that:

... existing mechanisms for co-ordination and effective decision-making in public education be improved by the establishment of a single education commission as a representative body able to bring the views of the community and employees to the development of overall policy for public education in New South Wales.⁵

However, the strength of the pressure for two commissions, did lead to an amended recommendation regarding TAFE, which was:

That the present Departments of Education and Technical and Further Education remain separate administrative units under the Commission; that there be separate teaching services for schools and technical and further education; and separate budget provisions for each.⁶

The report also recommended that the Higher Education Board remain a separate body with direct access to the minister but included the requirement that it consult with the education commission before making reports and recommendations to the minister on particular matters.

The Education Commission was established and survived for nearly a decade. In practice, it became merely an advisory mechanism to the minister and had very little impact on either the policies or operations of the Department of Education or the Department of TAFE as the director-generals of the two departments still had direct access to the minister and still retained responsibility for policy and operations. It did, however, have some unfortunate side effects. The decision to make the Education Commission the employer for the two teaching services, while the Public Service Board remained the employer for non-teaching staff, proved to be extremely divisive, both philosophically and administratively. This legacy remains, despite the fact that neither the Education Commission nor the Public Service Board exist today.

4.3 Victoria

TAFE in Victoria in the mid 1970s was a very complex organisation as TAFE programs were offered by two entirely self-governing technical colleges; by a number of self-governing institutions combining advanced education and TAFE elements; by technical colleges administered by the education department and by technical secondary schools also administered by the department.

During the early 1970s, following a report by independent consultants, there was a reorganisation of the education department. The principal structure had been five operating divisions for teacher education, primary, secondary and technical education and special services. The reorganisation changed this into a structure based on functions such as administration, curriculum, finance, buildings and personnel. Each of these was to service all the operational areas. Unfortunately this proved to be ineffective in practice as the administrative sections underneath the new management structure remained unchanged. This caused major problems in the early 1980s when attempts were made to separate TAFE from the Department of Education. The situation was further complicated by the attempts to regionalise the administration. For those involved in TAFE, the addition of regional service directorates to the operating divisions

within the Department of Education was seen to increase complexity rather than improve the efficiency of operations.

Following the release of the Kangan report, the State Council of Technical Education began to experience both the new sense of identity and excitement which had been infused into TAFE by the Kangan report, and an increasing dissatisfaction with the treatment TAFE was receiving from the education department.⁷ TAFE was also regarded as 'the poor cousin' in the joint CAE-TAFE institutions. The growing discontent with TAFE's situation was summed up in a submission to the Williams inquiry prepared by the Curriculum Board in December 1977, which stated that:

We believe that while TAFE organisation remains enmeshed within the wider Department, and its objectives and operations are hampered by primary and secondary school teaching in the top administration, and by the Teachers' Tribunal, it cannot be fully effective. In fact, we are concerned that TAFE may be prevented from developing sufficiently to meet the future challenges that we would hope would flow from your Inquiry. We therefore believe that the administration of TAFE should be separated from that of primary and secondary schools.⁸

In July 1976, the State education minister announced the establishment of a Committee of Inquiry into Post-Secondary Education in Victoria, under the chairmanship of Professor P H Partridge. The terms of reference of the committee were very broad as they were to advise the minister:

... on any matter relating generally to post-secondary education in Victoria and in particular with respect to -

- (a) the present and future demands for post-secondary education of all kinds in Victoria,*

- (b) *the present and future employment opportunities for people with post-secondary educational qualifications,*
- (c) *the proper patterns of development and relationships of the various streams of post-secondary education in Victoria determined in the light of the conclusions arising from (a) and (b) and of the educational issues concerned,*
- (d) *measures which should be implemented to avoid unnecessary duplication and overlap of courses and facilities in existing provisions for post-secondary education or likely to occur as a result of projected new developments.⁹*

As well, the committee was asked to constantly review all aspects of post-secondary education in Victoria; maintain liaison with the education department on the development of TAFE programs to ensure that duplication with other areas of post-secondary education was avoided and examine and report upon the levels of qualifications for entry to professions and trades in Victoria.

The role of TAFE was considered in Chapter 7 of the committee's report. The 27 submissions received by the inquiry concerned with TAFE matters commented on the inadequacy of TAFE funding, the way TAFE was treated in the department's budgetary process, the difficulties facing TAFE colleges recruiting staff under the Teachers' Tribunal and the Registration Board and in some cases, argued for an independent administration for TAFE. Although the committee conceded that 'given the distinctive character of TAFE it is evident that the system is unlikely to develop effectively if its administration is linked too closely to either a secondary or a tertiary education system'¹⁰, it did not recommend a separate administration for TAFE as existed in other States such as New South Wales and South Australia, but instead recommended a fairly complex set of arrangements.

The major recommendation was the establishment by statute of a new administrative authority to be called the Victorian Post-Secondary Education Commission (VPSEC) whose broad functions were to advise the

Victorian Government and the relevant Commonwealth authorities on all matters relating to the development, operation and funding of post-secondary education in Victoria. The committee also recommended the establishment by new legislation, of a Board of Technical and Further Education, subordinate and advisory to VPSEC and the abolition of the existing State Council for Technical Education. The new board was to be responsible for advising the commission on all matters relating to TAFE and for implementation, in the TAFE field, of the general post-secondary education policies evolved by the commission. The board's area of responsibility was to include all TAFE across the State, and also the technical and further education divisions of CAEs.

The committee did not support the proposals for a separate administration for TAFE, but instead suggested ways of effecting close working arrangements between the Board of Technical and Further Education and the education department and set some conditions upon which the inclusion of TAFE within the education department should continue. In addition, the committee commented that:

... if events show that these conditions are being inadequately met in the future, it may become necessary for the Victorian Post-Secondary Education Commission to recommend that the administration of TAFE be transferred either to a separate department of technical and further education or to a statutory authority set up for the purpose.¹¹

In 1978, the Victorian Post-Secondary Education Commission (VPSEC) was established and largely absorbed the functions of the Victoria Institute of Colleges and the State College of Victoria. Although its first priority was to restructure the advanced education sector, in 1979 it began its own inquiry into the need for a TAFE Board. In February 1979, VPSEC distributed a questionnaire to all TAFE institutions and organisations and other interested parties asking whether the TAFE board should be established and whether or not the administration of TAFE should remain with the education department. There was a much greater

response to the questionnaire than there had been to the Partridge committee and in November 1979, VPSEC reported to the Minister that 'taking note of the strong majority support contained in the submissions an interim Technical and Further Education Board should be established.'¹²

In 1980, the new minister for education, Mr A J Hunt, took a personal interest in the debate on the administration of TAFE. Through consultation with various parties, it became clear that all parties, except the education department, wanted a TAFE board with maximum autonomy. Therefore in February 1980, the minister announced the creation of a TAFE board which was formally established on 1 July 1980. The original idea was that the board would have responsibility for policy and planning for TAFE and that the administrative functions would remain part of the education department.

Within seven months, the new board was able to present to the minister a proposal for the future administration of TAFE, the main features of which were that:

- *the State-wide administration of TAFE should be separated from the Education Department;*
- *a small unit responsible directly to the TAFE Board should be established to assist in the formulation and implementation of its policy decisions;*
- *regional TAFE Boards should be established throughout Victoria to make decisions and recommendations regarding the most rational use of regional resources within the framework of TAFE Board and Government policy; and*
- *all providers of TAFE should remain responsible for administering their own programs within the context of state and regional policy decisions.¹³*

On the 7 April 1981, a ministerial statement was read in both houses of parliament which accepted that the State-wide administration of TAFE should be separated from the education department, supported the establishment of the regional boards, and supported the retention of existing TAFE providers who would remain responsible

for the administration of their own programs within the framework of policy decisions at the State and regional level.

Despite the establishment of the TAFE board, there were still a number of difficulties involved in administering TAFE. In 1981, TAFE was responsible to three ministers. These were the minister for education, the assistant minister for education (responsible for facilities) and the minister for labour. This situation was fraught with tension and made it difficult to get ministerial approvals. The TAFE board was also required to send everything to VPSEC for endorsement. This also created delays and tensions.

However, despite these difficulties, some progress was made. In September 1981, 31 colleges of TAFE were created. Twenty-nine of these were entirely separate from either technical schools or CAEs. Two, the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) and Swinburne, remained multi-sectoral colleges. However, negotiations were undertaken to ensure that the TAFE budgets were separate from the CAE budgets.

At the beginning of 1983, the part-time chairman of the board was replaced by a full-time chairman who was also the chief executive of the office of the TAFE board. Although the establishment of the TAFE board marked the beginning of a new era for TAFE in Victoria, it was to take to the end of 1986 before TAFE was finally separated from other sectors of education. During this period, there were changes of government and constant changes of ministers which led to continual restructuring of the office of the TAFE board, changes in membership of the board itself and immense difficulties in getting the board's reforms approved. There were six different ministers in less than a decade and each minister had an average life of less than two years. However by the mid-1980s, Victoria had finally achieved an identifiable TAFE sector.

4.4 South Australia

On 27 July, 1976, the minister for education announced the appointment of a Committee to Enquire into Post-Secondary Education in South Australia. This was the second major inquiry in less than a decade. The committee of three was chaired by Dr D S Anderson. Specific terms of reference were:

- *To gauge the requirements of the State of South Australia for courses and institutions in the post-secondary field, and to determine the extent to which these needs are being met from existing resources;*
- *To make recommendations to the South Australian Government as to what additional resources or what re-allocation of existing resources might best ensure that responsibility for satisfying these needs is adequately discharged;*
- *To investigate means of ensuring increased flexibility of movement of students between classes of institution and in particular the granting of credit for course work done in another institution; and*
- *To comment on any financial implications that any of the above may have on institutions providing post-secondary education.*

In undertaking this inquiry, the committee not only looked at the existing range of tertiary education students but also the post-secondary education needs of special groups within the community. These included Aborigines, migrants, women and people in country areas. It also looked at other issues being debated within Australia such as youth unemployment, recurrent education, recognition of credit, teacher education and community colleges. In respect of the last of these, it was recommended that:

... the name 'community college' should not be used in South Australia. In the technical and further education sector, country colleges with

continuing involvement in higher education should be known as 'regional colleges' and all other colleges as 'colleges of further education'.⁶²

The recommendations of the committee were intended to create a more co-ordinated system of tertiary education in South Australia. It was recommended that the three sectors would remain and that there would be two universities, six colleges of advanced education and the Department of Further Education administering its 29 colleges. It was also proposed that there would be a more effective use of resources as a result of amalgamations and greater collaboration between institutions with the establishment of a co-ordinating authority to be known as the Tertiary Education Authority of South Australia. This body would be able to plan for the entire system.

The proposed functions of the Tertiary Education Authority were to advise the minister of education and the federal authorities on the financial needs of post-secondary education in South Australia and to approve proposals for new courses to prevent a recurrence of the border disputes and unnecessary duplications that had occurred in the past. The committee also recommended that a specially constituted standing committee of the authority should be set up for accreditation purposes and that accreditation which in the past had applied only to advanced education and technician courses, should be extended to all substantial courses in the Department of Further Education.

The report made some specific recommendations relating to TAFE. One was that the Department of Further Education should, in collaboration with the Tertiary Education Authority of South Australia, give priority in its planning and allocation of resources to programs for unemployed youth and to the needs of such groups as Aboriginal persons, migrants, women and country residents. It was also suggested that, in its country colleges, the Department of Further Education should develop information and guidance services covering all aspects of post-secondary education and that the Tertiary Education Authority of South Australia should examine the possibility of country colleges providing higher education in conjunction with the universities and

colleges of advanced education. The South Australian Government endorsed the Committee's main recommendations and established the Tertiary Education Authority of South Australia (TEASA).

In 1980, the minister for education in South Australia appointed a Committee of Inquiry into Education in South Australia under the chairmanship of Dr John Keeves, director of the Australian Council of Educational Research. The committee was asked to investigate the conduct of education in South Australia and to review the effectiveness of changes that had occurred as a result of the 1971 Karmel inquiry. The committee was asked to report in two stages, thereby providing an opportunity for discussion and reactions on the first report, prior to developing the arguments and recommendations in the second phase. The first report was presented in February 1981 and the second in January 1982.¹⁵

The major recommendations that concerned TAFE, related to the functions of TAFE, education and technological change, accountability and planning. The report mentioned that there had been criticisms that the department had focussed its programs too much on the area of leisure education at the expense of providing an adequate supply of skilled tradesmen to industry. It was recommended that, in future, TAFE colleges would need to be more flexible and sensitive to the needs of industry than they had been in the past and that to assist in this, a TAFE advisory committee should be established.

In looking at education and technological change, following the release of the Myer committee report on technological change in Australia,¹⁶ the committee recommended that systematic study be undertaken to identify likely technological changes that would affect Australian industry; assess the effects of such technologies on the skills required by existing occupational groups and the need for new categories of workers and define the training that would be required to meet these changes. It was recommended that this study be undertaken by the new TAFE National Centre for Research and Development. The committee also looked at how educational institutions could use the new technologies in their teaching programs and how

technological change could be incorporated in the curricula of educational institutions at all levels.

In respect to accountability, the committee pointed out that expenditure on education was the largest single component in the State budget and therefore there was a need for continuing assessment of the progress of education in the State both for the purposes of accountability for the spending of public monies and because of the increased present and future demands made on the educational system. As well as recommending that every ten years provision should be made for a thorough evaluative review of the educational system at all levels, the committee also looked in detail at TAFE's policies and practices relating to teaching effort. A number of recommendations were made as to how the department could make more effective use of its staff and measures to be adopted to improve planning and co-ordination within TAFE.

The major change that occurred as a result of these reports, was the change of name from the Department of Further Education to the Department of TAFE. The advisory council was established but only lasted for three years. In line with changes that were occurring in all TAFE systems, action was taken to improve provision for disadvantaged groups. However, on the whole, there was little structural or organisational change to the system.

4.5 Western Australia

As a result of the rapid growth of post-secondary education in Western Australia following the Jackson report of 1967, at the end of 1974 the State Government appointed the Advisory Committee on Post-Secondary Education under the chairmanship of Professor P H Partridge. The terms of reference were wide-ranging and included:

- *The patterns of post-secondary education elsewhere in Australia and overseas including continuing education and non-traditional patterns of study;*

- The possible modifications of existing institutions and the development of new types of institutions to meet present and future educational and cultural needs of students at the post-secondary level;
- The principles that should govern access to post-secondary education and transfer of students between institutions;
- The extension of provision for post-secondary education to country districts in Western Australia, having regard to the development of areas concerned and not simply the economic viability of the institutions created; and
- Appropriate means and authorities, for future co-ordination and planning to ensure the efficient and balanced development of post-secondary education in Western Australia.

Unlike the Anderson Report on Post-Secondary Education in South Australia, which accepted TAFE as a post-secondary education sector without debate, the Partridge report considered the issue of where TAFE fitted in the educational spectrum. The report pointed out that the work of the Technical Education Division (of the education department) ranged widely in educational level and felt it was necessary for the committee to indicate which parts of the Technical Education Division should be accepted as falling within post-secondary education. As the report says:

... teaching illiterate adults to read or conducting a course in mathematics for the Tertiary Admissions Examination does not differ in educational level from primary or secondary teaching. At the other extreme, some of the sophisticated engineering, science or accounting studies are closely comparable to courses in colleges of advanced education. There are other study areas which are unique to technical education and have no counterparts in either colleges of advanced education or primary or secondary schools.¹⁷

The committee finally decided that technical education should be regarded as post-secondary education, partly because it enrolls only those students who are above the age of compulsory school attendance, and therefore concerned mainly with the education of adults, and partly because all the 'current teaching of the Technical Education Division is eligible for supplementary funding on the recommendations of the Technical and Further Education Commission of the Commonwealth government'.¹⁸

Another important issue that was debated, was whether or not the Technical Education Division should be separated from the administrative control of the Department of Education. The arguments raised, both for and against, were similar to those raised in Victoria a few years later during their Partridge committee of inquiry. The main argument for separation was that the Technical Education Division had always been financially disadvantaged because of the pressures in relation to primary and secondary education. While accepting that there might be some validity in these arguments, the committee did not agree with them, believing that the Technical Education Division of the department could find ways of informing the minister of its wishes, a view that shows a certain naivete in how government departments operate. However, in its final recommendations, the committee did end up proposing that the Technical Education Division should be removed from the education department and that a statutory body should be set up to be known as the Technical and Further Education Authority which, through its governing council should be responsible for the development and administration of technical education in the State.

The other major recommendations were the creation of a Western Australian Post-Secondary Education Commission, the establishment of a statutory authority for technical and further education, the amalgamation of the teachers colleges into a multi-campus college of advanced education and the creation of comprehensive community colleges in selected country areas.

In 1976, the Western Australian Government created the Western Australian Post-Secondary Education

Commission (WAPSEC) on the lines proposed by the committee and including the committee's recommendation that WAPSEC be required to give 'due regard to the traditional autonomy of universities and to the major role of universities in areas outside the scope of post-secondary education'.¹⁹ The main functions of WAPSEC were:

- *To consult and collaborate with the Government of Western Australia, the Commonwealth Commissions for Tertiary Education and TAFE, and the institutions for post-secondary education with regard to the planning, development and co-ordination of post-secondary education in the State;*
- *To consider the future development of post-secondary institutions, including the establishment, development and location of new ones;*
- *To consult with the post-secondary institutions and to advise the appropriate State and Commonwealth authorities concerning the funding.*

Acting on the advice of WAPSEC, the government decided not to amalgamate the teachers colleges as the colleges were sufficiently large and sophisticated to be in control of their own destinies. After long consideration, the government also did not proceed with the establishment of a statutory TAFE authority and TAFE remained within the department and the then ministry of education until the late 1980s.

4.6 Queensland

In 1978, the Queensland Government appointed a select committee to inquire into, report upon and make recommendations about, the system of education in Queensland and the extent to which it met the expectations of students, parents and the community. The terms of reference referred particularly to the efficiency and adequacy of secondary education and adequate technical education to meet industry needs. This was the first major review of education in

Queensland since the 1875 Royal Commission into Education.

The select committee (known as the Ahern committee), initially intended to present only two interim reports. However, following strong community response, the committee prepared further interim reports on key areas in education, rather than accumulating all the recommendations in the final report. The sixth (and last interim report) was on post-secondary education, and this included discussion about the feasibility of establishing community colleges in Queensland.

The final report of the select committee was tabled in 1980.²⁰ Although the terms of reference required the committee to examine the adequacy of technical education, apart from a few paragraphs in the section on the history of education in Queensland, there was not a separate section on technical education and there were only three recommendations relating to it the rest of the report. Two of these related to the provision of technical correspondence courses and the third recommended that no community college should be established without full consultation with all the post-secondary institutions which would be affected.

This last recommendation was made following concern expressed by some post secondary institutions regarding recommendations made in relation to community colleges in the sixth interim report.

The final report also made a brief reference to an issue raised in the sixth interim report regarding the difficulty students experienced when trying to transfer between TAFE colleges, colleges of advanced education and universities. However no recommendations were made as to how these difficulties might be resolved.

This inquiry into education in Queensland, therefore, had no impact whatsoever on TAFE and reflected the low priority TAFE received in that State. However, during the period 1976 to 1982, there were some changes in structure and operation. Technical and Further Education officially came into being on 1 January 1977 when by cabinet decision, the adult and technical sectors of the Department of Education were integrated. This

involved rationalisation of courses and resources and the placement of the former adult education officers (re-named extension program officers) into TAFE colleges.

Another change was the creation of a separate TAFE operations section in 1978 which had responsibility for providing a direct line between TAFE colleges and the head office organisation to co-ordinate all TAFE activities on a State-wide basis and to provide executive services to the Board of Adult Education. The operations section also assumed responsibility for student counselling, student health and welfare and all aspects of college safety. These changes were a result of the impact of Commonwealth funding on TAFE and the policies of CTEC rather than an acknowledgement by the State government of the need to expand and upgrade TAFE.

Unlike other States, there appears to have been little pressure exerted on the government during this period, to separate TAFE from the Department of Education and establish it as a separate authority. When the pressure did start in the mid to late 1980s the TAFE section was removed from the Department of Education and combined with the Employment and Training Department.

4.7 Tasmania

In 1975, the Committee on Post-Secondary Education in Tasmania (the Karmel committee) was appointed by the Australian and Tasmanian ministers for education to report on the promotion, development and co-ordination of post-secondary education in the State, having regard to its future needs. For the purposes of the inquiry, post-secondary education was to be broadly interpreted as including university education, advanced education and aspects of technical, further and continuing education.

The committee found that Tasmanian participation in TAFE was markedly lower than for Australia as a whole and that although, in the process of change, it was still dominated by traditional technical education for the trades. The committee believed there was considerable scope for the development of certificate level courses for

technicians and middle level or paraprofessional personnel. In addition, many of the post-secondary educational needs of the non-metropolitan areas of the State could be met by greater co-ordination and use of the resources of the TAFE and matriculation colleges and other governmental and non-governmental educational resources available in the community. The committee proposed that the role of the existing TAFE system in Tasmania should be broadened to enable TAFE to become a major vehicle for expanding post-secondary educational opportunities.²¹

The committee also recommended that a broadly based co-ordinating committee for Technical and Further Education should be established to report to the minister on the co-ordination of all TAFE activities within the State, including the integration of all the education department's post-secondary educational resources. The committee did consider whether a separate department or authority should be established for TAFE. Although it was decided that it was not warranted at that stage, it was recommended that the question be reviewed in five years time. This review did not occur, and it was not until the late 1980s, that TAFE was separated from the education department and combined with the Department of Employment and Training.

Following the Karmel committee's report, a Ministerial Working Party on Tertiary Education in Tasmania was established, chaired by Mr D A Kearney. This committee reported back in 1978 and endorsed the approach of the Karmel committee which in 1976 had recommended that the University of Tasmania should have the major responsibility for tertiary education in the south, the Tasmanian College of Advanced Education responsibility in the north and that there should be a new community college in the north-west. The Kearney committee also recommended the creation of a statutory tertiary education commission to advise the State minister on the establishment and location of any new tertiary institutions, consider the requests and submissions of the three institutions that related to their proposals for future developments in tertiary education and where appropriate report to the minister or the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission.

In August 1978, the minister for education in Tasmania announced that the government had decided to establish a Tertiary Education Commission along the lines proposed by the working party. However, the TAFE system would be administered by a director of further education from within the Tasmanian Department of Education, although TAFE would now be regarded as part of the tertiary education system and a State Council for Further Education would advise on the development and operation of further education.

4.8 The Australian Capital Territory

In September 1973, the minister for education announced that an inquiry was to be made into technical education in the Australian Capital Territory. The main catalyst for this was the decision made by the government to proceed with the setting up of an Interim Australian Capital Territory Schools Authority. This brought with it a need to examine provisions made in the Australian Capital Territory for technical education as this had not been made one of the responsibilities of the Schools Authority. In announcing the terms of reference, the minister referred to the inquiry as complementary to the ACOTAFE inquiry. The terms of reference stated that:

Bearing in mind that technical education in the Australian Capital Territory may become the responsibility of an authority established for that purpose, to investigate and report on technical education in the Australian Capital Territory and nearby areas including:

- (a) *the aims of technical education, taking into account community attitudes and aspirations and needs of individuals;*
- (b) *the development of courses to meet occupational requirements and community needs;*
- (c) *the organisational structure most suited to the aims and needs of technical education;*
- (d) *the recruitment and training of teaching staff;*



- (e) *the relevance of trends in technical education within Australia and overseas;*
and
- (f) *necessary planning and building programs.*⁷²

The committee recommended the establishment of an Australian Capital Territory Technical Colleges Authority, responsible to the minister for education to plan, co-ordinate and administer technical education in the Australian Capital Territory. The authority would be responsible for the existing Canberra Technical College at Reid, its annexes and for each future technical college to be provided in the Australian Capital Territory. The committee also recommended the establishment of college councils.

One of the most important recommendations was the one relating to liaison with the New South Wales Department of Technical Education which had up till then provided courses and teachers for the Australian Capital Territory. It was recommended that the proposed Australian Capital Territory Technical Colleges Authority maintain a liaison with New South Wales but that dependence on New South Wales be phased out progressively as the authority became able to assume a greater responsibility for technical education in the Australian Capital Territory. This recommendation was accepted and implemented, with teachers employed by the New South Wales Department of Technical Education being given the opportunity to either stay in the new Australian Capital Territory structure or to be transferred to another college in the New South Wales TAFE system.

4.9 The Northern Territory

Darwin Community College which had responsibility for TAFE was opened in 1974. Both practical and ideological reasons were behind the establishment of a community college rather than a more conventional institution such as a TAFE or an advanced education college. It was believed that one multi-purpose institution, providing a wide range of courses would be cheaper than establishing several different types of institutions. It was

also believed that there were advantages in mixing students from diverse backgrounds and doing different courses. Development of the college was severely disrupted by the cyclone which devastated Darwin on 25 December 1974. Not only were buildings damaged but important college records, equipment and other materials were blown away and never recovered. During and following the cyclone, remaining college buildings were used as a refuge for Darwin residents.²³

During 1974, the college operated mainly in Darwin, although it also had a major annexe at Alice Springs, known as the Alice Springs Community College, another substantial annexe at Batchelor and smaller annexes at Katherine, Altanga, Tennant Creek and Nhulunbuy. The Darwin Community College continued to be the main source of all post-secondary education in the Territory until changes occurred in the late 1980s.

After the Northern Territory became independent in June 1979, the Northern Territory Division of the Commonwealth Department of Education was abolished as responsibility for education was transferred to the new Northern Territory Government.

4.10 Conclusion

As can be seen from the above, there were considerable differences in the way the post-secondary education inquiries treated the issue of TAFE's independence and the findings of each were a demonstration of the lack of consensus on TAFE's role. Although most of the inquiries considered the issue of whether TAFE should become a separate administrative entity and admitted there were strong arguments in favour of this move, only in Victoria was some move made to separate TAFE from the education department. As Robinson points out 'six committees found TAFE too hard to catch, identify and place in its own pen'.²⁴

As was to be expected following the inability of the inquiries to come to terms with TAFE, the organisational and structural changes which occurred in each State and Territory were, in most cases, fairly minor, particularly

when compared to the enormous educational changes which were occurring within State and Territory TAFE systems. During the period 1976 to 1982, there were dramatic increases in enrolments, changes in the characteristics of TAFE students, improvements in student support systems and changes in the educational profiles of TAFE colleges.

In 1975, there was the first, and only, national survey of TAFE students which was undertaken by the Commonwealth Department of Education. In the introduction to the survey, it was pointed out that research in post-secondary education had been restricted almost exclusively to universities and CAEs and that for a several years detailed information had been collected and published on a wide range of demographic and socio-economic characteristics of students attending those institutions. By comparison, little information was available on TAFE. The survey found that in 1975:

The typical TAFE student is male, in his late teens and not married. Both he and his parents were born in Australia, and he lives with his parents. He completed the NSW Form 4 level or its equivalent at a Government secondary school, and is undertaking his first course since leaving school. He is not undertaking any other course. He is enrolled as a part-time student and his field of study is 'engineering' which he is undertaking in either Stream 2 (Para-professional) or Stream 3 (Trades). He works in a full-time job for an employer as a 'Tradesman, production-process or related worker', and there is about a 50/50 chance that he is bonded or indentured to his employer. He works a 40-hour week, of which less than 10 hours are spent attending a TAFE institution.²⁵

This profile was based on the main findings of the survey which were that:

- Males accounted for nearly 2/3 of TAFE enrolments;
- 30 per cent of total enrolments were in the 'engineering' field of study;

- *There was significant difference in the age distributions of male and female students with the median ages of 21.9 years for males and 27.6 for females;*
- *TAFE students were spread widely across all age groups, with nearly 13 per cent being 40 years of age or more;*
- *The patterns of attendance constituted a major difference from other post-secondary institutions. While part-time enrolments formed 28.5 per cent of total enrolments in universities and 32 per cent of enrolments in colleges of advanced education, 82 per cent of enrolments in TAFE were part-time or studying by correspondence;*
- *The level of secondary education completed by TAFE students varied considerably. While 19 per cent had progressed no further than Form 3, 18.5 per cent had completed Form 6; and*
- *80 per cent of TAFE students were in paid employment compared with 57 per cent for the Australian population 15 to 64 years of age.*

Although there was not an equivalent survey undertaken in later years to provide a basis of comparison, an analysis of CTEC statistics for 1982 shows there had been some considerable changes. For example, enrolments had more than doubled, the participation rates of females had improved, with 41.4 per cent of enrolments in Streams 1 to 5 and there had been a significant increase in adult enrolments. By 1982, 37.7 per cent of students were aged between 15 and 19 years; 32.4 per cent were aged between 20 and 29 years and 30 per cent were over 30 years of age.

While there was a major growth in the number of full-time enrolments in TAFE (from 25 000 in 1973 to more than 60 000 in 1982), part-time and correspondence students still accounted for more than 90 per cent of the total student population. However, while full-time students made up only 8.5 per cent of enrolments, their corresponding share of student load was 33.7 per cent across all streams of study.

TAFE was not only the largest sector of education in the size of its population, but the most broadly representative of Australian society in general. Participation in TAFE was uniform, with TAFE drawing its students from all social groups in proportion broadly consistent with their representation in total society.²⁶

The educational profile had also changed. Although the number of enrolments in trade courses increased significantly between 1975 and 1982, it declined as a proportion of total enrolments. The areas of greatest growth were Stream 4 (other skilled) and Stream 5 (preparatory). These categories included Commonwealth-funded labour market programs and a wide range of special access programs for disadvantaged groups such as women, Aborigines, people from non-English-speaking backgrounds, people with disabilities and the unemployed.

Thus, by 1982, TAFE was very different from the system it had been in 1975. The combination of economic, social and political changes at both State and Commonwealth levels had changed the charter, the structure, the nature of the student population and the educational profile. The provision of additional funding from the Commonwealth, both capital and recurrent, had enabled TAFE to expand to try to meet the ever-increasing needs for vocational and preparatory education.

The increased participation in TAFE was in large part a result of its increased accessibility to particular sections of the community, which in turn resulted in substantial changes to the student body. Growth in external studies enrolments reflected increased participation by the geographically and socially isolated. There was also an increase in participation by those under the age of 17, which was a reflection of increased TAFE involvement with secondary schools and an increased provision for the young unemployed.

All TAFE systems had policies and strategies in place to target disadvantaged groups and improve their access to TAFE. For example, in New South Wales during the mid to late 1970s, there were a number of new initiatives aimed at increasing community access to TAFE. In 1976, the Operation Outreach project was initiated as a pilot

project. The methods adopted included providing courses in non-institutional settings, conducting programs in languages other than English and developing courses in direct response to the special needs of the multicultural local community. During this period, the department also established a Women's Co-ordination Unit, an Aboriginal Education Unit, a Multicultural Education Unit and a Transition Education Unit.

There were also improvements in the quality of TAFE's educational provision and in the services it provided for students. These changes can be seen by the increase in the number of counselling staff, growth in the number of colleges with staffed libraries, increased effort in staff development and the provision of more up-to-date technology. The impact of the Commonwealth recurrent grants could also be seen in the more frequent updating of curricula, the adoption of more flexible student assessment techniques, the growing use of educational media and the increased involvement of TAFE staff in educational research and development.

Although not all TAFE systems had managed to disengage themselves from departments of education, the provision of specific purpose and tied grants from the Commonwealth had given them a greater financial autonomy and had enabled them to expand and gain a bit more operational autonomy. This was also a period when both Commonwealth and State governments began to regard TAFE as part of the tertiary educational system, rather than an extension of secondary education. In all the State government inquiries during this period, a constant theme was the place of TAFE in the educational spectrum. Although there was considerable debate, and not all States were prepared to separate TAFE from their education departments, all at least acknowledged that TAFE had to be recognised as a sector in its own right.

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5 The early years of the Hawke Government 1982-1987

5.1 Introduction

At the end of 1982, the Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser, believing that the drought would continue to have a debilitating effect on the Australian economy, called an election for March 1983. On the day he asked the Governor-General to grant him a double-dissolution, Bob Hawke gained the leadership of the Labor Party and in the ensuing election, won a comfortable lead in the House of Representatives. Although the Democrats held the balance of power in the Senate they were pledged never to use the Senate's authority to force an election. The new government was therefore able to entrench itself more securely than any previous Labor Government. The new Labor Government had another advantage in that for most of the 1980s, Labor was also in power in four of the six States. Gough Whitlam had frequently complained that, as Prime Minister, his hands were tied in many areas because he had the majority of State governments against him. This was a problem Bob Hawke did not have to face.

The Labor Party came to power with a platform of economic recovery through fiscal responsibility, efficient management and social equity, all to be achieved through 'consensus not confrontation'. Within two months of taking office, Prime Minister Hawke convened a national economic summit of government, business and labour at Parliament House. The delegates endorsed a prices-and-incomes agreement, including the restoration of wage indexation, as the cornerstone of the approach to economic policy. The most significant part of this was the agreement with the ACTU, known as the Accord. This represented a series of trade-offs between ACTU commitments to wage restraint and industrial harmony,

and ALP commitments to policies promoting full employment, welfare services and industrial revitalisation.¹ Like the previous government, the Hawke government espoused a policy of addressing the longer-term structural issues in order to bring on economic recovery.

As Don Smart points out 'education policy under the Hawke Labor Government from 1983 has frequently been characterised by paradox and contradiction.'² The triple economic problems of federal budget deficit, deteriorating international balance of trade and historically high youth unemployment, were the dominant forces influencing education policies. The Hawke Government's economic policies which were directed at enhancing competitiveness and productivity, encouraging an export orientation on the part of the manufacturing sector, creating new high-tech enterprises and cutting back on public spending had a very strong influence on its education policies. In the course of implementing these policies, a number of Commonwealth Government departments came to view tertiary education as a vital infrastructure to be utilised in the pursuit of national resources. It was thought that universities and CAEs could produce large numbers of technological and business graduates and gear their research capacities more closely to manufacturing needs.³ TAFE was seen as an important vehicle for improving the skill levels of the labour force and alleviating the problems of unemployment, particularly for the young unemployed. The result of these beliefs was that a number of agencies entered the field previously dominated by CTEC either by initiating new programs or gaining control of existing programs, leading to creation of the paradoxes and contradictions mentioned by Smart. As will be discussed in a later section of this Chapter, within this new environment the traditional balance of power changed and the structures that had provided the co-ordination and synthesis of competing policies were no longer effective. The power-plays that were enacted within the Commonwealth Public Service during this period had a destabilising effect on education and led ultimately to the demise of the Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission.

As far as tertiary education is concerned, the Hawke years fall into two distinct eras. These were from 1983 to mid 1987, when Senator Susan Ryan was minister for education and the period 1987 to 1991, when John Dawkins was minister for employment, education and training. The change in title is a reflection of the changes that occurred during this period.

5.2 Labour market programs

The Labor Party's economic policies came to be the driving force behind its education policies. Since the mid 1970s, successive Commonwealth governments sought to improve labour market conditions, particularly to resolve the politically sensitive problem of youth unemployment. Thus the late 1970s and early 1980s saw the introduction of various labour market programs aimed at reducing the unemployment rates of 15-19 year olds. In quick succession, programs such as ÉPUY, the Transition From School-to-Work Program, the Community Youth Support Scheme (CYSS) and the Youth Training Program were introduced and replaced. These programs were a combination of educational and labour market programs managed by either the Department of Employment and Industrial Relations (DEIR), the Department of Education or both.

Although there were a number of benefits from these programs there were also a number of problems. Funding problems arose from Commonwealth control of costing methods which meant TAFE was forced to subsidise them. This became even more of a problem when in 1981, DEIR began buying programs from TAFE on a fee-for-service basis. Although this started on a small scale, by 1984 the total outlay was \$12.1 million which represented a substantial proportion of the Commonwealth's total recurrent funding for TAFE.

Another complaint from the States was about the frequent changes to programs which occurred with little or no prior consultation and with very short lead times for implementation. This also meant that there was little evaluation of the effectiveness of programs because usually, by the time they were established sufficiently to

be evaluated, they were abolished and new programs introduced. Even within the Commonwealth, there were variations in interpretation of guidelines and conflicting priorities because of different funding cycles and location of responsibility for program management within departments. The increasing tensions between CTEC, DEIR and the Department of Education in the mid 1980s only served to exacerbate this situation. Not only did the number of Commonwealth-funded labour market programs increase during the early 1980s, the number of Commonwealth bodies administering and funding these programs also increased. Robinson estimates⁴ that, by 1984, eight Commonwealth bodies other than the TAFE council were funding programs in TAFE colleges.

An important labour market program was that of pre-apprenticeship training. In 1983, as a counter-cyclical response to the 30 per cent decline in apprenticeship intakes in 1982-3, the Commonwealth initiated the funding of additional Trade-Based Pre-Employment (TBPE) courses for TAFE to maintain the general level of trade and trade-related training. Although originally intended as a one-off expansion of this type of training, funding was continued in subsequent years. The continuation of funding was a mixed blessing because of the conditions imposed by the Commonwealth. TBPE courses were very expensive to run, as they were full-time trade courses and thus one TBPE place was equivalent in cost to four apprentice places. In order to receive funding for a set number of TBPE places, TAFE had to provide a certain number of State-funded pre-apprenticeship places. The proportion of State-funded to Commonwealth-funded was in the order of 4:1. This not only tended to distort TAFE's educational profile but led to tensions and conflict in the negotiation of the numbers of places to be funded each year and how much each place should cost.

Also in 1983, another new program for young people was introduced, the Participation and Equity Program (PEP). In the words of the then minister for education, Senator Susan Ryan, this was designed to be:

... the centrepiece of the overall framework of youth policies ... The program will have the twin objectives of increasing participation in education

and introducing greater equity in the Government's overall provision for young people ... Government wishes to achieve a situation where, by the end of this decade, most young people complete the equivalent of a full secondary education, either in school or in a TAFE institution, or in some combination of work and education.⁵

In 1984, \$74 million was allocated for PEP in schools, TAFE and universities. Most of this was targeted at the approximately 40 per cent of schools with the lowest retention rates, to be used to reduce the number of students leaving school prematurely. The main objectives of the TAFE PEP program were to improve TAFE's response to the education and training needs of young people, particularly those in the 15-19 year old age group and to provide for the development of special courses which would improve the quality and range of courses available to less able and unemployed young people; expand schools-TAFE collaborative opportunities and offer a progression of skills leading to formal recognition on completion or a basis for further education and training. The PEP program was the joint responsibility of DEIR, CTEC and the Department of Education, with DEIR providing the income support for students, CTEC having responsibility for overseeing the delivery and the Department of Education co-ordinating and providing policy advice. Although initially announced with a fanfare, PEP went the same way as most of the other labour market programs, initial enthusiasm followed by a change of priorities. Within 12 months, PEP's funding was halved.

The Hawke Government's concern with structural reform of the economy, and in particular the issue of unemployment, led to the appointment, in late 1983, of a Committee of Inquiry into Labour Market Programs, chaired by Peter Kirby. This committee had a broad charter to examine labour market policy and programs and the context in which they were developed and to recommend improvements. Rather than undertake a detailed audit of individual programs, the committee decided to focus on the fundamental philosophical, systemic and structural questions that needed to be

resolved to develop a coherent framework for government intervention in the labour market.

This committee's report, which was released in January 1985⁶ made 86 recommendations which were designed to set a new direction for labour market policy which would give greater emphasis to the needs of the individual for access to education, training and other support to deal with a variety of labour market conditions. The report made a number of recommendations aimed at rationalising existing programs. Many of the other recommendations were similar to those of earlier reports, in that they called for better statistics and the need for improved labour market planning.

The most important recommendation, however, was the proposal for a new structured training system for young people. The report said that one of the committee's major concerns throughout the inquiry had been the inadequate recognition accorded to further education and training in the existing array of labour market programs. The committee believed that there should be more options which combined both education and work as this would enhance the labour market prospects for individuals and add to the stock of skills in the economy. It therefore recommended the development of a system of traineeships which would combine broad-based vocational education and training in an institution with work in a related occupation, to form an integrated training system. As proposed, the formal off-the-job training component was to be a minimum of 13 weeks, in the form of day-release for two days a week, and this training should be provided by TAFE institutions. It was also intended that graduates of the scheme would have the opportunity to progress to more advanced areas of education, training or employment if they wished.

The Australian Traineeship System (ATS) was introduced in 1985 as the cornerstone of the Commonwealth Government's Priority One Program for young people. The joint Commonwealth-State administration of the ATS was then formalised by a series of agreements, concluded during 1985-86 in which the respective roles of the Commonwealth and State and Territory governments were outlined. The 13 week off-the-job

component in TAFE was regarded as integral to the ATS training package. TAFE received a \$1 700 fee per trainee, to fund this program. The Commonwealth also provided funds for curriculum and staff development and some funds for capital purposes. As usual, an immediate response was expected from TAFE in implementing the off-the-job training component as the introduction of the scheme was announced in August 1985 and the first trainees were expected to be recruited at the beginning of 1986.

The primary objective of the ATS was to provide a system that borrowed the strengths of the apprenticeship system, that is the co-ordinated combination of work and study, but without the stringent legislative obligations and to introduce the system in areas where traditionally, there had been little provision of formal training. The clerical and retail areas were two that were specially targeted. However, the success or failure of the ATS depended upon the support provided by industry and commerce, as they would have to provide the on-the-job training. Initially, private enterprise was slow to become involved and the early traineeships were mainly in the public sector. The ATS was also as vulnerable as apprenticeship to the vagaries of the economy, and like apprenticeship, participation in the scheme fell during economic downturns. A problem for TAFE was the difficulty in negotiating changes in the fee structure as the \$1,700 per place was insufficient to cover costs and once again, State governments were forced to subsidise a Commonwealth initiative. States such as Queensland, found it difficult to continue to provide traineeships in geographically isolated areas as the small numbers of trainees in each area raised the costs of delivery well above the level of the funds provided.

Other labour market programs introduced in 1985-86 in response to the Kirby committee's recommendations were the general wage subsidy scheme, Jobstart, the adult training program and the community training program. Following the Kirby committee's recommendations for changes to advisory structures for employment and training, a tripartite (government, employers and union) review of administrative and advisory structures was established. The review group submitted its report to the Minister for employment and

industrial relations in December 1985 and on 20 May 1986, the minister announced the Government's intention to establish the Australian Council for Employment and Training (ACET) to advise on employment and training policy. ACET was formally established on 1 November 1986. However, it only had a short life and was abolished in 1987, only 12 months after it was created, as part of John Dawkins' restructuring of advisory bodies.

Tension existed between TAFE and DEIR because of the fundamental differences in their philosophies and functions. On the one hand, TAFE saw its function as delivering a broad vocational education which provided the skills and knowledge required to allow mobility between enterprises within a given occupation and which would provide a recognised credential. On the other hand, DEIR had a strong employment focus which emphasised short, intensive courses to provide a narrow range of vocationally-specific skills. Thus while DEIR could buy packages of education from TAFE and specify requirements, courses were developed by TAFE systems and taught in TAFE colleges by TAFE staff and therefore could not be completely separated from TAFE values. This situation was also exacerbated by the frequency of change of labour market programs and the tensions arising from the negotiations of funding for the fee-for-service courses.

This tension not only affected TAFE's relationship with DEIR, and the relationship between the Commonwealth and the States but also spilled over to CTEC and brought both funding and policy issues into conflict in the Commonwealth arena.

5.3 Review of TAFE funding

In 1984, a major change to CTEC's approach occurred as a result of the appointment of Mr Hugh Hudson as its chairman. Hudson arrived with the reputation of an experienced administrator 'with a sophisticated grasp of political realities'. Hudson had a great belief in the need for cross-sectoral arrangements, which was reinforced by the pressure being placed on CTEC for improved economies of operation in tertiary education.

As a result of these imperatives, after a decade of change in all sectors of tertiary education, CTEC undertook two major reviews in 1986. These were the *Review of TAFE Funding* (May 1986) and the *Review of Efficiency and Effectiveness in Higher Education* (September 1986). Both reports documented the substantial changes which had occurred in both sectors over the decade and described the achievements that had been made in broadening access and responding to community needs. While the higher education review suggested directions for change within institutions, the review of TAFE concentrated on directions for future funding.

The review of TAFE funding was undertaken because of concern that, given the radical changes and developments in TAFE over the decade, existing programs might no longer be relevant to their original objectives. As well, TAFE systems were becoming increasingly concerned with the plethora of Commonwealth programs and funding bodies which were imposing heavy administrative pressures on the States. As the New South Wales TAFE submission stated:

From the point of view of the State, the growth in Commonwealth funding sources outside CTEC's triennial planning process has added substantially to the administrative burdens and costs imposed upon TAFE. The complex administrative arrangements which are entailed in CTEC's triennial planning processes are compounded by the burden of liaising with a growing number of Commonwealth departments, each with its own particular administrative and accounting procedures ... The growth of Commonwealth funding from non-CTEC sources imposes administrative costs upon TAFE at both the college and head office levels which are rarely recognised in the guidelines for particular programs.⁸

The Williams report had also recognised the emerging problems of multiple funding sources, but its comments were not taken up. The original recommendation of the TAFE council was for a modest review of the form and extent of all Commonwealth funding for TAFE. The

proposal was transformed by CTEC into a major inquiry in which CTEC itself, rather than the TAFE council, set the agenda.⁹ As Robinson points out¹⁰, the differences of approach between the education and employment arms of the Commonwealth came out into the open during this inquiry. The proposal being pushed by the employment arm was for the Commonwealth to buy the services it required of TAFE in place of the existing arrangement of funding through recurrent and capital grants which was supported by the education arm. However, the committee considered and rejected, any major change in the division of responsibility between the Commonwealth and States for the funding of TAFE although it did recommend considerable restructuring of grants and the arrangements under which they are provided in order 'to achieve more effectively an outcomes-orientated approach with effective accountability'.¹¹ The main proposals were for:

- a new program to be established to fund enrolment growth in TAFE in specified areas;
- funding to be for specific purpose programs to meet identified needs of particular disadvantaged groups;
- joint Schools/TAFE Co-operative Courses to be established;
- grants for quality improvement to be maintained at the existing level.

Although both the TAFE council and CTEC supported the proposed changes, the dramatic changes that occurred at the Commonwealth level in 1987 which included the demise of CTEC, meant that these recommendations were not implemented and a completely different set of funding arrangements were set in place. These will be discussed in the following chapter.

5.4 The demise of CTEC

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, an emerging trend in the mid 1980s was the growing interest by a number of Commonwealth departments in tertiary education. The Department of Industry, Technology and Commerce

(DITAC) strongly urged a greater industry orientation in the content and types of courses offered by institutions and together with the Department of Science, believed that higher education research facilities and expertise should be more closely linked to the private sector. The Department of Employment and Industrial Relations (DEIR) believed that the training component of labour market programs should be an employment matter rather than an educational one and thus should be much more closely related to narrow skills training rather than the broader vocational education preferred by the education sectors. The Department of Education also started taking a more active involvement in tertiary education, particularly in the Participation and Equity Program and with DEIR, in the Australian Traineeship Scheme. The Department of Finance and the Treasury considered the tertiary education sector to be an area with potential for greater efficiency and cost saving.¹²

As Marshall points out¹³, between 1983 and 1986, it became increasingly difficult for CTEC to perform its role. During this time, it was issued with four different sets of guidelines which became increasingly detailed in content and had the added difficulty of including a range of disparate objectives which reflected the often conflicting stances of a number of different and competing agencies. Thus CTEC was faced with the problem of attempting to reconcile a variety of disparate objectives with insufficient funds. It was also under pressure from the Department of Finance to perform.

The Government's guidelines for the 1985-1987 triennium included a request for the review of CTEC. This was undertaken by its chairman, Hugh Hudson, and the report was submitted in March 1985.¹⁴ The reasons given for the need for change included the voluminous reports prepared by the council, the duplication of effort between the councils and the commission and the remoteness of the commission from the institutions. It was also felt that the existing structure encouraged 'ambit bids' from the sectors and that insufficient time was spent on encouraging intersectoral developments.

The main changes proposed were the extension of CTEC's charter to cover the promotion of inter-sectoral developments; the change from statutory councils to

advisory councils and consequential changes in the roles of the full-time and part-time members of the commissions and councils. These changes were accepted and on 1 July 1986 the three councils were abolished and the advisory councils established by legislation. As far as the TAFE Advisory Council was concerned, its new role was to provide a report to the commission every three years on: the state of TAFE institutions and TAFE in Australia; problems in relation to TAFE and priorities for future developments in relation to TAFE. The major change in the legislation was that reports would no longer contain recommendations in respect of grants to be made to particular States or particular institutions.¹⁵

The changes in structure were mirrored by a change in approach. In 1985, the commission had supported a 'tripartite' system consisting of three parts with soundly based but distinct roles but which would also be complementary to each other. Two years later this approach was modified to a 'trinary' format in which students can avail themselves of opportunities on the basis of free movement between the three sectors.¹⁶ This new position was demonstrated in 1987, with the announcement by the commission of its intention during 1988-90 to:

... re-examine the existing division of the post-secondary education sectors in Australia, with a view to proposing new arrangements which would achieve the objectives of increased efficiency and increasing inter-institutional co-operation without damaging teaching standards.¹⁷

However the changes both to structure and function were not enough to save CTEC. In 1987 there was a massive restructuring of the Commonwealth Public Service with the creation of a number of 'super departments' and as part of this move, a new department, the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) was formed. This comprised the whole of the Department of Education, the employment divisions of DEIR, the Office of Youth Affairs (from Department of Prime Ministers and Cabinet) and the TAFE section of CTEC. As CTEC was then left with very

limited functions, the decision was made in October 1987 to disband it.

The demise of CTEC meant the end of a very important era in tertiary education. As Pusey points out:

Through the membership of these statutory bodies Canberra federal governments for two decades, had drawn on the best advice of a cross-section of experts and organisations with interests in education; with these resources, they had augmented the capacity of their own staff to make informed decisions about education policy.¹⁸

Another consequence quoted by Pusey is the comment by a long-since retired chairman of one of the commissions that 'the whole system has lost its corporate memory'.¹⁹

Although some of CTECs methods may have been cumbersome, CTEC did at least have a co-operative rather than a confrontationist approach to both the States and the various sectors of education. The triennial planning process, although time-consuming, did at least allow a national picture to emerge and an opportunity for State policies and priorities to be recognised and to be taken into account in the development of national policies. The inclusion of TAFE directors on the council and the advisory council, again meant a State TAFE perspective was provided, something sadly lacking in subsequent advisory structures. Although the establishment of DEET had the potential to rationalise the conflicting Commonwealth policy objectives, it also had the potential to exacerbate tensions between the Commonwealth and the States as its view of the development of national policies for education was a 'top down' approach of imposing its policies on the States rather than the co-operative approach favoured by CTEC.

The establishment of DEET and the demise of CTEC marked the beginning of a new era for TAFE, one of dislocation, constant restructuring and increased tensions between the Commonwealth and States.

5.5 The Australian Conference of TAFE Directors

The early 1980s were important years for the development of TAFE as they saw the growth of national co-operation between the State systems. This was largely achieved through the efforts of the Australian Conference of TAFE Directors (ACTD). ACTD had its origins in world war two meetings of State officers who met to co-ordinate the Technical Training Scheme. Following the Kangan report and the growth of the State TAFE systems, it had developed as a strong, co-operative and influential group.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, ACTD established a number of standing committees, working parties and special interest networks, to undertake special projects, provide policy advice and to work together in specific areas of national importance to develop more consistent and integrated policies, programs and strategies. These groups included the Curriculum Projects Steering Group (CPSG), the Building Officers Group (BOGs), the Classification of Courses Committee, the Joint Committee on TAFE Statistics (JCTAFES), the National Working Party of Women's Advisers in TAFE (NWPWAT) and the Staff Development Working Party. A number of these working parties and committees also included a representative from the Commonwealth.

The major functions of ACTD were to:

- to provide a national focus for TAFE;
- to provide a national point of contact for other educational and industry bodies;
- to develop national policy stances, submissions to national inquiries and responses to reports of national inquiries;
- to encourage the development of national consistency of standards across the State TAFE systems.

There were a number of major projects that were undertaken by ACTD during the early 1980s. One of these was, at the request of the AEC, the development of a detailed proposal for the establishment of a national centre for TAFE research. Although the stimulus for this

request was the recommendation made by the Williams committee Report on Education, Training and Employment, this idea had first been proposed by the Kangan committee which recommended that:

An Australian TAFE Technology Centre should be established as a company limited by guarantee for the purposes of adapting technology to vocational education and of researching, developing and producing learning and other educational aids by itself or through others. The Centre should also serve as the Clearinghouse for relevant research, disseminate information from abroad, commission relevant research, publish a journal, arrange where appropriate for the publication of textbooks, admit for periods of training administrators and other persons with experience in technical and further education and arrange such other matters as may be desirable from time to time. Finance should be provided through the Australian Minister for Education in such a way as to make the Centre financially accountable to him, but otherwise the Company should operate on business-like lines and attempt to break even on production activities.²⁰

The proposal developed by ACTD was accepted by the AEC in June 1980 and the Centre was established in Adelaide and became operational in November 1981. As recommended in the Kangan report, the centre was established as a company, whose members were the Commonwealth and State ministers for education. The centre also had a board of directors whose members represented TAFE, industry and unions. Funding was provided by the Commonwealth and State governments. Although the centre started initially by undertaking and commissioning research, over the years its activities have expanded so that today, they encompass practically all the functions proposed in the Kangan report. In 1985, the centre assumed responsibility for the national TAFE clearinghouse system which had been established in 1980 to develop a database of, and clearinghouse for, TAFE research documents.

Two important initiatives were the development of national core curricula under the direction of the

Curriculum Projects Steering Group (CPSG), established in 1982 and the development of a system for collection of national TAFE statistics. CPSG was established to develop national core curricula as a means of promoting national consistency in course content, sharing expertise and reducing costs of course development. This committee later changed its name to the Australian Committee on TAFE Curriculum (ACTC) and in 1991 to the Australian Committee on Training Curriculum (ACTRAC). However, its fundamental purpose has remained unchanged and it has been very successful in developing national core curricula. The Joint Committee on TAFE Statistics (JCTAFES) which included a representative from the TAFE council, developed, administered and monitored a system for the collection of national TAFE statistics. Both the Kangan and Williams reports had been very critical of the lack of appropriate and accurate statistics, a problem which has been alleviated by the work of the joint committee, although there is still some way to go.

However, perhaps the most important achievement of ACTD was the development of a new system of classification of TAFE courses and a new, and nationally consistent, nomenclature of TAFE awards. In 1973, ACOTAFE carried out a survey of technical colleges with the assistance of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). For the purpose of the survey, the committee classified the educational activities of technical colleges into six main academic streams. However, almost from the beginning there was considerable dissatisfaction within TAFE with this system, as it was believed that it did not adequately reflect the educational characteristics of TAFE courses.

In 1980, a Working Group on Classification of Courses was established by the ACTD. In 1982, a report was completed which recommended that a two-dimensional classification be retained and that it consist of revised streams and fields. The new stream classification system involved four main categories of courses which were divided into 19 sub-categories. The four main streams were:

<i>Stream 1000</i>	<i>Courses for recreation, leisure and personal enrichment</i>
<i>Stream 2000</i>	<i>Courses for entry to employment or further education</i>
<i>Stream 3000</i>	<i>Initial vocational courses</i>
<i>Stream 4000</i>	<i>Courses subsequent to an initial vocational course.</i>

After the new system was approved at the ACTD meeting of November 1983, work began on the development of a new system of TAFE awards. In 1982, a new working party prepared a comprehensive analysis of awards and nomenclature used by TAFE authorities in all States and Territories. The working party found that while substantial similarity existed between the criteria used to determine the appropriate award for a course of study, there was little correlation between the forms of nomenclature used for the awards. To overcome this problem and to provide portability of awards, it was agreed that there were two issues which needed to be considered in introducing a new system. These were the desirability of having uniformity of nomenclature in TAFE throughout Australia and the desirability of establishing comparability and compatibility of the nomenclature of TAFE awards with those of other sectors of tertiary education.

The major considerations that were taken into account when formulating the recommendations for the new system were that the mobility of the Australian population, the movement towards national industrial awards and the growth in the number of firms operating in more than one State, contributed to the need for uniformity in TAFE provision across Australia. TAFE was already attempting to respond to the need for consistency by developing national core curricula in appropriate subject areas and by the establishment of the new classification system. The adoption of a uniform system of nomenclature across States was seen to represent a further, positive move towards national consistency. It was also seen to be important to link TAFE awards with other tertiary education awards.

At the April 1984 meeting of ACTD, agreement was reached on a new model of nomenclature. The main

feature of this model was that awards for courses were assigned on the basis of their stream classification. Thus:

3600	Diploma
3500/3400	Associate diploma
3300	Advanced certificate
3200	Certificate
3100/2000	Statement of attainment
1000	Statement of attainment
4000	Endorsement of awards.

This model was referred to the June 1984 meeting of the AEC for endorsement. The ministers decided to establish a task force to consider the proposals in the context of the existing awards system in the advanced education sector. The task force was to report back with firm recommendations for the implementation of a national system of TAFE awards which, together with the system of advanced education awards, would form a coherent system of awards across the two sectors.

As a result of the recommendations of the Task Force, the AEC resolved that:

- a nomenclature of awards be adopted for courses in the streams of TAFE;
- the assessment and accreditation of courses should remain a State and Territory responsibility;
- a national register of TAFE courses should be established;
- an Australian Council of Tertiary Awards (ACTA) should be established to develop and maintain a national register of tertiary courses;
- with respect to TAFE, ACTA should have the following functions:
 - (a) to promote consistency throughout Australia in the application of the proposed nomenclature model for TAFE awards;
 - (b) to establish and maintain liaison with the accrediting authority for TAFE courses in each State and Territory;
 - (c) to provide an information service in connection with the courses and awards offered;

- (d) to establish, maintain and publish a national register of TAFE courses;
 - (e) to issue guidelines for the registration and periodic re-registration of TAFE courses; and
 - (f) to monitor adherence to these guidelines.
- with respect to advanced education, ACTA would assume the responsibilities of the Australian Council on Awards in Advanced Education (ACAAE) which had been established in 1971 to provide national registration of advanced education awards.

The establishment of the new classification system and the new award system marked a major advance in the development of a national TAFE structure and philosophy. Although the rights of the States remained paramount, a start had been made to develop a national TAFE ethos. The establishment of ACTA and the inclusion of advanced education and TAFE in a national tertiary system of awards, resolved issues relating to paraprofessional awards in TAFE and the advanced education sector and also marked the beginning of attempts to develop an articulated system of tertiary education.

Another important achievement of ACTD, was the improvement of financial support for TAFE students. In 1984, the New South Wales Department of TAFE undertook research into income support arrangements for TAFE students.²¹ The general findings of the study were that there were major anomalies between arrangements for advanced education and higher education students, and those for TAFE students. Unlike other tertiary education students whose main source of assistance was TEAS, TAFE students were faced with a bewildering array of income support schemes. Although most full-time students were eligible to apply for TEAS, those in the Stream 5 (preparatory courses), were specifically excluded. Those students doing adult matriculation courses, were eligible to apply for the Adult Secondary Education Scheme (ASEAS). Students enrolled in Commonwealth-funded English for Specific Purposes Programs were eligible for a special allowance although those in State-funded courses were not only ineligible for the special allowance but were also

ineligible for TEAS. Students enrolled in the Commonwealth Labour Market programs received other training allowances. In addition, the Commonwealth had provided special funds to universities and CAEs for loan funds for emergency financial assistance to students. TAFE students, who generally came from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, had no such safety net.

The main reason that these anomalies had occurred was that the existing income support schemes had been developed without any consideration of the needs and characteristics of the TAFE sector, as TAFE was seen as catering predominantly for part-time students. TEAS was developed to assist university and advanced education students and TAFE students appeared to have been added as an after thought. ASEAS was aimed purely at assisting students to gain entry to higher education institutions. The training schemes, and allowances, concentrated mainly on employment with little or no reference to the vocational education and training implications. The lack of co-ordination between the schemes was also a reflection of the lack of co-ordination of policies and programs within the Commonwealth.

ACTD took this matter up both with the Commonwealth Department of Education and with the AEC. As a result of the identification of these problems and pressure from ACTD for change, when the new system of financial assistance for students, AUSTUDY, was introduced the major anomalies had been reduced. However, the absence of funding for emergency financial assistance remained.

The achievements outlined above, were very important steps in the development of a national TAFE system and the strengthening of links between the separate TAFE authorities. ACTD was extremely successful in achieving, in the words of the Deveson report, 'the replacement of eight discrete TAFE systems with a more integrated set of national policies and more coordinated training arrangements'.²²

5.6 Conclusion

From a State perspective, the period from 1982 to the beginning of 1987 was a relatively stable period. Although in some States, such as Victoria, structural changes begun in the early 1980s were being completed, for most TAFE systems it was a time of consolidation. This period was also the start of the development of a national TAFE ethos. Although responsibility for TAFE was still very firmly in the hands of State governments, the State TAFE systems started to work together to develop national consistency in curricula, statistics and credentials.

During the Ryan years, education remained relatively unaffected by the growing 'economic rationalist' approach to government. This was to change very rapidly with the coming of the Dawkins era.

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6 The Dawkins revolution 1987-1990

6.1 Introduction

The period from 1987 to 1989 was a time of unparalleled change for all sectors of education. For schools, there was a significant push from within the Commonwealth Government to increase Australia's traditionally poor retention rates to year 12. There were also moves towards development of national core curricula and national standards testing. For higher education, there was a total shake-up which led to the dissolution of the binary system through the amalgamation of the advanced education sector with the universities. For TAFE, there was the development of 'the training market', the move towards competency-based training and the push towards 'skills formation' rather than broad vocational education and training. At the Commonwealth level, there was a major change in the national advisory structures. For all sectors of education, the years 1987 to 1990 were ones of dislocation and constant restructuring. These changes have been a result of the national economic imperatives and the strong interventionist policies of the Commonwealth minister for employment, education and training, John Dawkins.

The basis of the economic difficulties facing Australia was the trade problems of the mid 1980s which led to sharp falls in the terms of trade in 1985 and 1986 and a marking down of the value of Australia's commodity exports. This then contributed to a decline in the current account and a growth in foreign debt. The deterioration in Australia's external position highlighted the need for structural adjustment of industry to make it more efficient and competitive. It was also recognised that structural change would generate new demands for high value-added products and services which would be intensive in their demands upon knowledge and skills. The necessity to compete effectively in international markets would demand significant improvements in

national productivity performance, involving the introduction of new technologies and new forms of work organisation. This led to a new appreciation of the importance of human resources and skills to national economic performance as Australia would require a flexible and highly skilled workforce in order to be able to maximise productivity, produce quality goods and exploit new technologies and market opportunities.

It was believed that changes to work organisation and new technology would require a change in the mix of skills which an individual would need to acquire. There would be a greater need for higher level cognitive and problem-solving skills, together with social skills which foster team work and leadership. These would need to be combined with the more traditional motor skills. The term 'multi-skilling' was used to denote the need to ensure that the labour force acquired both a wider range and a higher level of skills. There was also a recognition of the need for education and training of adults throughout their working life.

These factors set the context within which the ACTU and the Commonwealth Government formulated proposals for changes to vocational education and training within Australia. There were two seminal reports released in the mid 1980s which set the agenda for change. These were the ACTU's report, *Australia Reconstructed*¹, and a report circulated by John Dawkins called, *Skills for Australia*.²

6.2 Australia reconstructed

In 1986, the ACTU discussed with the minister for trade, John Dawkins, the desirability of a fact-finding mission to a number of European countries which had grappled with problems similar to those being experienced by Australia. In particular the ACTU was interested in visiting those countries which had overcome balance of payments constraints in ways which produced low unemployment, low inflation and economic growth which was more equitably distributed.

The Missions's report examined, and made recommendations about, macro-economic policies; wages, prices and incomes; trade and industrial policy; the labour market; industrial democracy and strategic unionism. The section of the report on 'Labour Market and Training Policies', was of particular importance to education and training. It stated that 'one of Australia's overriding concerns must be its deficient skills base'³ as Australia's future international competitiveness will depend largely on how successful it is in creating advantages based on its ability to exploit up-to-date knowledge and skills-intensive products and processes. Success in a world of rapidly changing technologies will require a constant effort to acquire and develop state-of-the-art skills. This view formed the basic tenet of Commonwealth Government policies and programs for the next six years.

The report also highlighted the low proportion of teenagers engaged in various kinds of post-secondary education and the large number of young Australians who, through unemployment, were denied access to skills training through either work or education. Problems of entry and re-entry into the labour market and school-to-work transition were also identified. It was pointed out that there was a need for Australia to achieve further increases in retention rates. In addition, it was proposed that curricula designed for university entry and the courses for labour market entry should share a common core of skill content. All these issues were raised in the Finn Review of Post-Compulsory Education, five years later.

There was also evidence that Australia was not producing the right skills as well as not producing enough skilled people.

The three main priority areas were:

- *the need for greater participation in education and training to raise the general level of literacy and numeracy of young Australians, as well as to facilitate the introduction and use of advanced technologies, procedures and services in industry.*

- *'equality of access' in education and training should be pursued to reduce the disparities in the level of education and skills of the young workforce.*
- *the need for action to be taken to improve skills in communications and numeracy; to ensure Australia's young workers have a higher technological awareness and are adept in current technology; to promote more education and training in business and management skills; and to promote more cross-disciplinary study and training.*

The report also accused management in Australia of not supporting on-the-job training (other than through apprenticeships) and of not providing the required level of investment in skill formation.

There was also a high degree of labour market segmentation in Australia that was totally indefensible on efficiency and equity grounds. It was pointed out that structural barriers preventing the full participation of women in the labour market must be removed if Australia was to become internationally competitive.

Although most of these issues were not new, indeed many of them had been raised in every government report since, and including, the Kangan report, this report proved to be seminal in that it provided the framework for the Commonwealth's education and training policies. In particular, the emphasis on the needs of the labour market rather than the needs of the individual and the coining of the term 'skills formation' to replace TAFE and training, gave a strong indication of the new directions which were to be taken in applying economic rationalism to vocational education and training.

6.3 Skills for Australia

The foreword of the 1987 Report, *Skills for Australia*, set out the government's new agenda by saying:

the Government is determined that our education and training systems should play an active role in responding to the major economic challenges now facing Australia.⁴

Specifically action was required to:

- *increase the total level of participation in education and training and expand the national training capacity;*
- *improve the quality and flexibility of our education and training systems, and hence the quality, breadth and adaptability of skills acquired;*
- *improve the distribution and balance of the national education and training effort, to better meet the long-term needs of the economy and labour market;*
- *raise the level of private sector investment in training and skills formation;*
- *improve the employment and training opportunities available to the unemployed and otherwise disadvantaged members of the community*
 - *including measures to reduce the high degree of occupational segregation in the labour market and to improve training opportunities for women; and*
- *increase the productivity of our education and training resources and evaluate the outputs achieved from the use of those resources.⁵*

The report announced a major restructuring of Commonwealth assistance for TAFE, to take effect from 1 January 1988. This involved the combining of the Capital Grants, Special Equipment and TAFE Minor Works and Equipment Programs for Traineeships into a single TAFE Infrastructure Program. Funds were to be allocated on the basis of competitive bidding, with individual proposals being considered on their merits. The Fees

Reimbursement and Designated Recurrent Grants were to be replaced by a General Recurrent Program which would be subject to Resource Agreements with the States covering a commitment to pursue improvements in productivity in 1988, including terms and conditions of staff employment; agreed target growth rates in designated courses of high priority to meet skill shortages, equity objectives, or areas of strategic importance to future economic development; and changes in administrative arrangements to retain revenues from entrepreneurial effort.⁶

This report announced major changes in funding for TAFE and presaged further, significant changes in industry's role in training and the beginning of the concept of the 'open training market'. The change in funding arrangements for TAFE did not occur without some resistance by some States. The New South Wales minister for education, Rodney Cavalier, for example, refused to sign the resource agreement, although this was signed immediately by his successor following the change of government. It was not so much the content of the resource agreement, but the fact that the change was announced as a *fait accompli*, without prior consultation with the States, that caused a negative reaction in some States. Certainly the intention of the resource agreement, to reduce the number of funding categories and to free up how these funds were spent, was a change the States had been wanting for some time. However, the way this change was made was seen by the States as yet another example of the Commonwealth imposing its wishes on the States without due consultation and with no regard to the States' own policies and priorities.

6.4 The establishment of the Department of Employment, Education and Training

As was mentioned in the previous chapter, on 14 July 1987, the Prime Minister announced sweeping structural changes to the Commonwealth Public Service. The restructuring involved the reduction of the number of departments from 27 to 13 super departments and abolished what was known as the 'second division' and

replaced it with a Senior Executive Service. It also strengthened the power and responsibilities of the central agencies, (Prime Ministers and Cabinet, Treasury and Finance) while at the same time leaving them more or less undisturbed by the impact of the reorganisation. As Pusey says:

... the brunt of the rationalisation fell most heavily on the spending departments and especially on the more vulnerable and politically weaker program and service departments.⁷

Pusey also points out that perhaps the most revealing of the structural changes were those that were wrought upon the former Department of Education. The most obvious change was that the amalgamation took the education department from Senator Susan Ryan, a member of the 'left' faction of the party and a humanities graduate, took the employment and training function from Ralph Willis, a neo-Keynesian, and put them together to form a new super department of Employment, Education and Training under John Dawkins, an economics graduate. As Pusey says, 'this shift symbolically mirrors the essence of changes in the intellectual context of what was to emerge in their education policies.'⁸

This move is also a good example of Peter Wilenski's statement that:

... many of the really important reforms of administration are basically political in character and that this political aspect is often hidden because the political nature of administration is hidden.⁹

For TAFE, the shift of the locus of power from CTEC to the new department meant that, through the Commonwealth funding mechanisms, there was much greater ministerial control and influence than there had been in the past. The abolition of the Participation and Equity program and its replacement by the Australian Traineeship Scheme and other short, skills-development schemes is indicative of the influence of the economic rationalist approach to education and training. This approach also led to a much greater emphasis on

regulation of vocational education and training as will be seen in the Commonwealth policies and programs introduced in the early 1990s, which are discussed in Chapter 9.

6.5 The establishment of the National Board of Employment, Education and Training

Another change which affected Commonwealth-State relations was the new advisory structure established to replace CTEC. Following the abolition of CTEC, and as part of the process of integrating the development of its employment, education and training programs, the government appointed a task force chaired by Mr Charles Halton, to review and report on advisory arrangements and structures to complement the establishment of the new Department of Employment, Education and Training. This task force was asked to consider ways to bring together the programs and advisory arrangements 'for employment, education and training in such a way that a more skilled and adaptable workforce, responsive to changing economic and social circumstances, could be developed within a better informed and educated community'¹⁰. The task force reported back at the end of 1987 and recommended the establishment of a new advisory body, the National Board of Employment, Education and Training (NBEET).

NBEET was established by the *Employment, Education and Training Act 1988* which came into effect on 1 July 1988. This Act also repealed the *Commonwealth Schools Commission Act 1973*, the *Commonwealth Tertiary Education Commission Act 1977* and the *Commonwealth Employment Service Act 1978*. The board was established with a two-tiered structure of the board itself and four specialist constituent councils. These councils were:

- The *Schools Council* which was responsible for advising the board on primary and secondary education, including general development, funding and the identification of priorities for staffing and facilities.

- *The Higher Education Council* which was responsible for advising the board on higher education, including its general development, funding, consultation with institutions on educational profiles, and identification of priorities for staffing and facilities.
- *The Employment and Skills Formation Council* which was responsible for advising the board on matters relating to employment, TAFE (including TAFE funding); skills formation policies, programs and services; and the promotion of effective training in business and industry.
- *The Australian Research Council* which was responsible for advising the board on national research priorities and the co-ordination of research policy, including support for fundamental research, the development and implementation of research programs and ways to enhance research personnel training and the interaction of the research sectors involved.

The role of the board was to undertake inquiries into relevant issues in response to references from the minister and on its own motion and to draw together and integrate the operations and advice of the four councils.

The board was established to have up to 13 members drawn from various sections of the community with experience or expertise in employment, education, training or research. The chairs of the four councils were members of the board and four other members of the board were also council members so that each council had two board members. Of the 13 board members, the legislation required that two persons be drawn from business or industry, two from trade unions and at least seven from the areas of education, training, science or technology.

Although NBEET and its councils seemed to have adequate representation from the higher education and schools sector, representation from the TAFE sector was noticeably lacking. Not only did the term 'TAFE' not appear in the title of any of the councils (instead the

fairly meaningless term 'skills formation' was used) but there was not one TAFE representative on the board itself, and only one TAFE officer, a nominee of the Australian TAFE Principals Association, on the Employment and Skills Formation Council (ESFC). Despite consultation with the chairman of the task force, Mr Charles Halton, the Australian Conference of TAFE Directors was not represented on the council. At a national conference held in 1988, the deputy chair of the board stated that:

TAFE is not specifically identified in the Council sub-structure of the Board. I suspect this is because TAFE has a role both in higher education and in employment and skills formation.¹¹

However, as TAFE was not represented on the Higher Education Council either, it is hard to see how TAFE was in a position to provide any sort of policy input to either higher education or skills formation.

The replacement of CTEC by NBEET meant that TAFE (unlike the other sectors of education), no longer had any input to the major national advisory process. This lack of representation is probably the reason that the ESFC and the Higher Education Council have made little attempt to consult with TAFE systems, either individually or through ACTD (before its abolition).

Consequently, both NBEET and the ESFC have been regarded as irrelevant to TAFE and the exclusion of TAFE from the national advisory mechanism has not helped Commonwealth and State relationships. Consultation at a national level has subsequently been with DEET which has the operational responsibility for policies, programs and funding.

6.6 The restructuring of higher education

Although TAFE had felt the initial impact of the reforming zeal of the new minister through the change in funding arrangements and its exclusion from NBEET, it was the higher education sector that felt the full brunt of the reform process. This was presumably because higher

education institutions were more vulnerable than TAFE and school education because they were fully Commonwealth funded. Whereas the Commonwealth could only directly affect the margins of the other two sectors, and try to set in place strategies and policies for longer-term change, through its funding mechanisms the Commonwealth was in a strong position to make fundamental changes to higher education.

Two papers by John Dawkins prompted the restructuring of the higher education sector at the end of the 1980s: the 'Green Paper', *Higher Education: A Policy Discussion Paper* (1987) and the 'White Paper', *Higher Education: A Policy Statement* (1988).

Although the main impact of the White Paper was felt by higher education institutions, there were some implications for TAFE. The paper pointed out that TAFE shares with higher education the major responsibility for post-school or tertiary education in Australia. Both the Green Paper and the White Paper canvassed a number of options to foster closer links between TAFE and higher education. These were to recognise and expand the legitimate role of TAFE in providing higher education courses on its own account, to make selected use of TAFE facilities in assisting students taking courses offered by a higher education institution and to foster closer links between TAFE and higher education in matters such as course articulation and credit transfer.

The first of these proposals was in line with the changes that had already started occurring within TAFE following the implementation of the new system of awards and the establishment of the Australian Council of Tertiary Awards (ACTA). The proposed abolition of the binary system and the amalgamation of advanced education institutions with universities, meant that once this process was completed, higher education institutions were likely to progressively withdraw from the provision of associate diploma and diploma courses. As happened in New South Wales in 1949 and again in 1965, this would leave a gap in provision that, once again, TAFE would be expected to fill. However, in its response to the Green Paper, ACTD did stress that it would not wish to see the emphasis placed on its higher level programs at the expense of its other provisions.

The proposal that higher education institutions make selected use of TAFE facilities, was one that was approached with caution by TAFE institutions because of the potential impact on an already inadequate infrastructure of student services. This was one area that TAFE systems would deal with on an individual basis, through negotiations with the relevant higher education institution. Victoria, for example, has a long history of joint TAFE-higher education institutions and would be more likely to become involved in further development of this process.

The proposals regarding articulation and credit transfer were supported very strongly by TAFE, as it had been trying for some time to negotiate credit transfer arrangements with higher education institutions with mixed success.

The two papers also raised, but did not resolve, the question of what should be the balance of provision between higher education and TAFE. This matter is currently being investigated by NBEET in conjunction with issues about the future funding arrangements.

6.7 Industrial award restructuring

While the Dawkins reforms had a dramatic effect on higher education, the changes affecting TAFE were more insidious, possibly because TAFE systems were mainly State funded and major changes could only be introduced through agreement of the States with Commonwealth policy directions and through Commonwealth funding of specific programs. One area of Commonwealth reform which had a considerable effect on both State industrial relations and TAFE systems was industrial award restructuring.

In the August 1988 National Wage case, the Federal Industrial Relations Commission determined that wage increases should be conditional upon unions agreeing to participate in a review of industrial awards 'to improve efficiency of industry and provide workers with access to more varied, fulfilling and better paid jobs.' It was established that these reviews would be guided by the

centrepiece of the new wages system the Structural Efficiency Principle.¹² This decision was of great significance as it linked salary increases with the acquisition of higher levels of skill. In May 1989, the commission confirmed that award restructuring would remain the basis of the wages system and also agreed to a major restructuring of Australian industrial awards and working conditions. This decision has involved a major review of training arrangements and infrastructure.

A paper by John Dawkins, released in 1988, called *A Changing Workforce*,¹³ outlined the implications of award restructuring for education and training. The paper pointed out that training takes place in an industrial relations framework and reflects the work organisation and occupational structures determined by that framework. Occupations and consequently training arrangements are rigidly defined by both horizontal and vertical segmentation, as well as along rigid gender lines. These features frequently inhibit the development of both entry and advanced training arrangements necessary to meet changing skill needs.¹⁴ The paper proposed that in most areas of industry, the number of job classifications and the demarcations between them must be reduced. This would allow training to be more broadly based and to have a multi-skilled approach. It was also pointed out that structured training arrangements did not exist for a large number of occupations, particularly those in traditionally female occupations.

The paper made several statements that have since been accepted by both State and Commonwealth training regulators, as the major principles which should drive Australia's vocational education and training system. The first was the need to change from a 'time-served' system such as apprenticeship, to a 'competency-based' approach where entry to 'qualified' status is based on achieving specified standards of skill. There was also recognition of the need for diversification, as well as the expansion and improvement, of Australia's training infrastructure through greater emphasis on industry-based formal training provision. This was seen to be a means of providing competition for TAFE and would act as a major spur to increased efficiency, quality and relevance of formal training provision.

In line with the recommendations in *Australia Reconstructed*, this paper also stated the need for direct industry investment in the education and training system. Two possible mechanisms were identified for formalising the required increased contributions by industry to training costs. These were:

- (a) *acceptance by industry of responsibility to provide for the funding of increased training, particularly as part of award restructuring processes; and/or*
- (b) *the establishment, by legislation, of a framework for training funds to be financed by industry, which would also have the primary responsibility for the effective use of those funds.*

Once again, the issue of the need for action to bring greater consistency to the separate training systems of the States and Territories was raised. The major inconsistencies were seen to be in the form of structured training arrangements for individual occupations, the length of training, formal curricula and recognition of basic skill levels. These policy directions were included in the resource agreements negotiated with the States.

Following the release of a statement called *Improving Australia's Training System* in April 1989, John Dawkins convened a special conference of relevant Commonwealth, State and Territory ministers with responsibility for vocational education and training. The key decision reached at the conference was agreement between the Commonwealth, States and Territories to support and accelerate the adoption of competency-based training. To this end it was agreed that a National Training Board (NTB) should be established to take responsibility for the setting of national skill standards. Ministers agreed that the Commonwealth, States and Territories would operate within the terms of those standards. The board's members would be drawn from the Commonwealth, all States and Territories and employers and unions.

6.8 Competency-based training (CBT)

As was mentioned earlier in this chapter, the concept of competency-based training was introduced in *Australia Reconstructed*, and the nexus between CBT and award restructuring was identified in the 1989 report, *Improving Australia's Training System*. The implementation as the basis for delivery of vocational education and training in Australia, was endorsed at the special ministerial meeting held in April 1989. The pace of change was accelerated with the November 1990 agreement between ministers to introduce CBT by 1993.

The aim of CBT is to provide certification as a result of proving competence rather than the completion of a training course. Through CBT, a trainee would be assessed against agreed standards of a particular industry rather than being assessed on achievement relative to other trainees over a period of time. It is believed that as curricula gradually becomes competency-based, students will be assured that competencies gained will reflect the needs of industry and be nationally recognised. Employers can be confident that receipt of certification of job competency is based on current needs in an industry, consistent with national standards and equally valid in all parts of Australia. This also means that an individual's prior learning will be recognised, regardless of where and how it was acquired.

The linchpin of the system as proposed and endorsed, is the development and ratification of national competency standards. These are designed to establish a direct link between the competencies required in particular occupations and industrial classifications and formal vocational education qualifications.

CBT is also based on the principle of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). However, systems for assessment of prior learning are a relatively new concept and no satisfactory working model as yet exists.

As those involved in developing and implementing CBT are discovering, these systems require an unusual amount of effort to get ready to use. They require long lead times and the development costs are substantial.

The system, as proposed, requires industry to play a major role in setting standards and taking on increased responsibilities for training delivery, as it places considerable emphasis on increasing the extent and quality of training conducted in the workplace. At present, the capacity of employers and their willingness to participate in the system is largely untested, and uneven where does it exist.

6.9 The National Training Board (NTB)

The National Training Board (NTB) commenced operations in April 1990. The NTB was established to operate under a memorandum of understanding whereby the ministers agreed to provide and accredit vocational education nationwide within the framework of national competency standards. The board's main role was to assist industry to develop and then endorse national competency standards for occupations and classifications in industry or enterprise awards or agreements. The NTB also became involved in the Training Guarantee Scheme.

The concept of a Training Guarantee was first raised in the 1988 discussion paper *Industry Training in Australia: The Need for Change*. The legislation came into force on 1 July 1990. Its aim was to:

... increase the quantity and quality of industry training by ensuring that employers with a payroll above \$200 000 spend at least a specified minimum amount on structured training, broadly defined. As the scheme is targeted at employers who currently spend nothing or very little on training, it will also ensure a more equitable distribution of effort in relation to employee-related training among employers.¹⁵

The legislation required employers to spend at least 1 per cent of payroll in 1990-91 and 1.5 per cent from 1 July 1992 on quality, employment-related training that would most benefit their business.

The NTB was given the functions of registering, de-registering and supervising the Registered Industry Training Agents (RITAs); giving certificates in some cases to the Australian Taxation Office, to RITAs and to employers and advising the minister for employment, education and training on regulatory guidelines.

The appointment of RITAs was seen as a way of opening up the training market. Their role was to advise employers in eligible training and categories of training expenditure and issue training advisory certificates which indicate to the Australian Taxation Office that the training and education expenditure meets the requirements of the Act. Employers who failed to spend the required minimum on eligible training activities were required to furnish a statement to the Taxation Office and pay a charge equal to any shortfall. In 1990-91, the Australian Taxation Office collected \$3.7 million from 1500 employers who failed to meet their training obligations under the Act. However, little of this money will be spent directly on training as it will be divided up between the Australian Taxation Office, DEET and the NTB to cover administrative costs.¹⁶

Although there is as yet no evidence of the success of the Training Guarantee in improving the quantity and quality of in-house training in industry, it appears to have been very successful in spawning a new industry, that of Industry Training Agents. Within twelve months of the legislation coming into force, the NTB had received 382 applications to become RITAs and had made 210 appointments.

The main role of the board, however, was to, in consultation and co-operation with industry, set national skill standards for occupations and classifications in industry or enterprise awards or agreements determined by an industrial tribunal including entry level, operative, trade, post-trade, technician and para-professional classifications. The skill standards were to relate to other components determined by industry sectors and/or States and Territories for certification at any given level of occupation or classification.

The development of national competency standards is to be undertaken either by the industrial parties or by

Competency Standards Bodies (CSBs) recognised by the NTB. Only one body or consortium is recognised by the NTB for any occupation, industry or industry sector. To be formally recognised by the NTB as a CSB, an industry body must have expertise, or have access to expertise in competency standards development; be identified and accepted within industry as being representative of an occupation, industry or industry sector and have the clear support of other industry parties.

The process of developing standards and gaining their approval has proven to be a very lengthy exercise and progress in setting national competency standards has been very slow.

The main achievement of the NTB to date, has been the development of a framework to classify competency standards developed by industry. Known as the 'Australian Standards Framework', it was designed to establish reference points so that standards properly relate to the range of competencies required in particular occupations and classifications on the one hand and formal educational qualifications on the other. The framework has six levels for classifying work-based competencies and a further two levels covering professional competencies.

6.10 Conclusion

John Dawkins managed to achieve massive changes to the Australian education and training system in a very short period of time. Between 1986 and 1990, he managed to set in place the structure for a new higher education system; change the basis of the industrial relations system and establish the guidelines which would significantly change the structure and processes of the vocational education and training system.

As Peter Karmel points out, the abolition of CTEC and its replacement by NBEET with its four councils was clearly an assertion of ministerial power.¹⁷ NBEET and its councils are strictly advisory, have no administrative responsibilities and only have a small staff. The strength of CTEC was largely due to the knowledge it built up

through administering the programs it recommended. This knowledge influenced the advice it gave on priorities and desirable developments. Karmel sees the divorce of policy advice from program administration as 'a recipe for its irrelevance'.¹⁸

The changes which moved the management of programs away from a statutory authority and into the hands of DEET, meant that the new consultative arrangements became direct bilateral dealings between individual institutions and departmental officials. Although the new arrangements were supposed to result in less interference with the internal management of institutions and less regulation, in practice it has meant more of each. More interference and the imposition of greater administrative burdens due to greater regulation, inevitability resulted in strained relations between the Commonwealth, individual institutions and State governments. These tensions came to a head in the early 1990s, resulting in a lengthy and bitter power struggle between the Commonwealth and the States.

The special ministerial conference had considerable implications for TAFE. As well as endorsing the introduction of competency-based training and the establishment of the NTB, ministers also agreed to endorse the Commonwealth's strategy for reform of arrangements for the recognition of overseas qualifications, reaffirm the importance of the Australian Traineeship System and apprenticeship as mainstream entry-level training systems and to co-operate in appropriate reforms of entry-level training. These agreements not only had a profound effect on the future direction of vocational education and training but also had an effect on the restructuring of TAFE systems which was occurring across Australia. The years 1986 to the early 1990s saw major (and in some States, multiple) restructuring of the TAFE and training systems. These will be discussed in the following chapter.

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7 Restructuring of State TAFE systems 1986-1992

7.1 Introduction

The period 1986 to 1992 was a period of constant change of both structure and governance within State TAFE systems. This brings to mind the words of Petronius in AD 66:

We trained hard ... but every time we were beginning to form up into teams we would be reorganised. I was to learn later in life that we tend to meet any new situation by reorganising ... and a wonderful method it can be for creating the illusion of progress while producing inefficiency and demoralisation.

As well as feeling the impact of new Commonwealth vocational education and training policies, TAFE systems were also affected by State and Territory government policies. During this period, there was a general trend to remove TAFE from the education portfolios and incorporate it within employment and training portfolios. Although this has a superficial similarity to the changes that took place with the Commonwealth Government, with the creation of the Department of Employment, Education and Training each state restructured in a different way. The historical differences between state TAFE systems continued to affect how they responded to the new challenges. Although each State now has a different structure from that in 1986, that structure remains unique to that State.

7.2 Northern Territory

In 1980, the Northern Territory Government established the Northern Territory Vocational Training Commission to coincide with the commencement of the Industries Training Act 1979. The commission replaced the Apprentices Board and was a tripartite body. A major amendment of the Act in 1982, transferred from the Education Department, responsibility for:

- (i) *formulation of policy and planning for TAFE;*
- (ii) *provision of advice to the Minister on the coordination of policy and planning of TAFE activities in the Territory;*
- (iii) *preparation of coordinated funding proposals and advice to the Minister for general funding and building needs in relation to both Commonwealth and Territory sources of funds for TAFE; and*
- (iv) *responsibility for evaluation and accreditation of TAFE courses.*

However, operational functions for TAFE remained with the Department of Education and the Darwin Community College.

In 1984, the Chief Minister instigated the reorganisation of post-secondary education in the Northern Territory. Under the new structure, the Vocational Training Commission's education and training functions for TAFE were transferred back to the education department. These functions included TAFE policy and planning; accreditation of TAFE courses; planning of Aboriginal employment and training and operation of the Territory's Training Centre. With these changes, the department's TAFE division became the TAFE authority for the Northern Territory. Advice to the minister on essential TAFE matters was now to be provided by the TAFE Advisory Council which was chaired by the secretary of the department and included representatives of college councils, industry and unions. One of the aims of the reorganisation was to give various post-secondary institutions greater decision-making powers and so the Northern Territory of Australia Act 1985 transferred

powers from the department to the councils of the Darwin Institute of Technology, Katherine Rural College, Batchelor College and the Community College of Central Australia.

In December 1985, the University College of the Northern Territory was created by an Act of the Territory Government. This was to be financed entirely by the Territory Government in the early years since the Commonwealth Government declined to provide the funding for this purpose before 1991 at the earliest. The Northern Territory Government entered into a contract with the University of Queensland for the awarding of degrees until the college became an independent university.

Following the release of the Green and White Papers on higher education, the government decided to legislate for a Northern Territory University which would assume responsibility for the courses previously taught by both the University College and the Darwin Institute of Technology (until 1984, this was the Darwin Community College). As the Darwin Institute of Technology had included a TAFE component, the new university (which commenced operation in 1989) became the first university in Australia to offer both higher education and TAFE courses, through the Institute of TAFE.

Since 1988, executive powers in relation to TAFE matters have been delegated to the secretary of education. The Education Act provided for a Technical and Education Advisory Council whose role has now been subsumed by a new training authority, the Northern Territory Employment and Training Authority.¹ This authority has four advisory councils, the Accreditation and Registration Advisory Council, the Employment and Training Needs Planning Advisory Council, the Planning and Resources Advisory Council and the Aboriginal Programs Employment Training Advisory Council. The authority reports directly to the minister for education and the arts on a range of issues including the allocation of funds and resources, capital works and policy priorities. It also works closely with the Department of Education, the Northern Territory University and the

TAFE colleges to enhance training opportunities, co-ordinate programs and arrange credit between institutions.

As part of these new arrangements, the existing TAFE division has been renamed the Post-Secondary Education and Training Division. Its deputy secretary now has responsibility for the International Project Management Unit, Employment and Training Branch and the Northern Territory Office of Tertiary Education. Delegated authority for the delivery of TAFE courses remains with the Northern Territory Open College of TAFE, Batchelor College, Alice Springs College of TAFE, Northern Territory Rural College and the Institute of TAFE (Northern Territory University). Each college has a council which conducts the affairs of its college and is responsible for efficient and effective administration and financial and physical resource management.

7.3 Victoria

On 19 December 1985, the Victorian minister for education, Ian Cathie, announced that an in-principle decision had been taken to transfer all TAFE provision from schools, to the direct control of the various TAFE colleges in Victoria. It was planned that, by 1987, the schools in which TAFE programs were conducted should relate to the TAFE board in one of two ways. The first of these was the 'college campus' model which was to be used where the TAFE provision in a school was substantial and where the facilities used for TAFE purposes could be separately identified. Teachers involved in the delivery of TAFE programs would have the opportunity to transfer to the TAFE teaching service. The second way was the 'college cluster' model which would allow TAFE programs at a school to be offered on an agency basis for the appropriate college of TAFE. Under this model, staff and facilities would continue to be supplied by the schools division. This decision was historic in that the schools division would no longer be recognised as a provider of TAFE in Victoria. This announcement also marked the abolition of the 113-year old Victorian Education Department and the establishment of a new Ministry of Education.

In November 1987, the Division of Further Education came into existence as a result of the Ministerial Review of Further Education in Victoria (the Edgar report). This division had direct responsibility for identifying the need for further education in Victoria and for developing strategies to meet that need. The division had specific responsibility for the development of policy in relation to adult literacy and basic education, whether conducted by community providers or in TAFE colleges. It also had responsibility for migrant language programs provided by TAFE, the Adult Migrant Education Service (AMES) or community providers.

November 1987 also saw the replacement of the TAFE board by the State Training Board. This was established by the Victorian Government to bring together the administration of the TAFE college system with the training responsibilities of the Department of Labour and the Industrial Training Commission of Victoria. The State Training Board's mission statement was to:

Develop a flexible and relevant training system which can assist industry, unions and government by providing a highly skilled and flexible workforce essential for economic and social development. The Board will develop relevant training opportunities for the workforce and community in general and for labour disadvantaged groups in particular.²

A prime objective of the State Training Board was to review and reform the industry advisory structure so as to give accurate, adequate and timely advice on the training needs of industry, the community and government; to encourage industry and training providers to jointly assume a leading role in the training system; to subsume the existing 100 current sub-committees currently providing this advice and to take an industry rather than an occupational approach to the planning of training. The board also had a mandate to develop a more responsive TAFE system which would include industry representation in central planning, industry involvement in college governance and effective and constructive cooperation between the office of the State Training Board, college councils and college directors.

Other objectives included the reform of legislation in relation to training, the implementation of college performance agreements, improving access to training, the development of a database in relation to skill shortages and training needs and the development of industry training foundations. The board also had responsibility for the development of management systems for both the office of the State Training Board and training providers which would include preparation of individual training plans, the implementation of a TAFE management service within colleges and the State training system and for encouraging the entrepreneurial activity of colleges.³

The new State training system therefore was comprised of:

- The State Training Board and the Office of the State Training Board;
- A network of TAFE colleges;
- Non-TAFE college providers of vocational education and training;
- Industry Training Boards; and
- Industry networks and skills centres located in TAFE colleges and private industry.

Mr Ivan Deveson, then of Nissan, was appointed as the chairman of the new board. The board assumed the responsibilities of the TAFE board and these were delegated to the general manager of the State Training Board. The 12 members of the board were appointed by the government and included representatives from employer groups, trade unions and education bodies.

The board was originally established under the Post-Secondary Education Act 1978 but this was changed in 1990 with the passing of the Vocational Education and Training Act in June 1990. This Act also provided a legislative framework for changes to apprenticeship, in particular for the introduction of competency-based training (CBT) and the simplification of administrative procedures.

The office of the State Training Board was originally established as an associated administrative unit within the Ministry of Education. The role of the office was to

advise the minister on vocational education and training and skills formation policy, support the work of the State Training Board and other authorities and administer the state training system. In 1992, the office became part of a new Department of Employment and Training.

In January 1990, 15 Industry Training Boards were established with another four being created the following year. The major function of these boards is to develop an industry training plan, which would encompass predicted outcomes of industry restructuring, needs arising from changes in technology, the likely training outcomes of award restructuring and present and future skills required for industry.

The TAFE colleges retained the same level of autonomy they had always enjoyed, although they did have to enter into performance agreements as a condition of funding. In 1987, two existing colleges, Collingwood and Preston, were consolidated into a new college, the Northern Metropolitan College of TAFE. To give appropriate impetus to making training a very high priority and encouraging greater industry participation, the Vocational Education and Training Act, 1989 was assented to in June 1990. Under this Act, the 31 TAFE colleges and private providers were, with certain exceptions, empowered to deliver training. However, a number of institutions were still administered by individual acts. These were the Victorian University of Technology, the Victorian College of Agriculture and Horticulture, Swinburne Ltd, Gordon Technical College, the School of Mines and Industries and Ballarat Ltd. The effective and efficient management of these college under their Acts is the responsibility of the college council.

Victoria, unlike most other States, had a number of colleges which included both advanced education and TAFE components and therefore was affected more than other States by the restructuring of higher education and the introduction of the unified national system. There are now four universities which have TAFE components. These are the Victorian University of Technology, Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, Swinburne University and the Victorian College of Agriculture and Horticulture which has now merged with the University of Melbourne.

7.4 Australian Capital Territory

In July 1987, responsibility for TAFE in the Territory was transferred from the Commonwealth Department of Education to the Australian Capital Territory administration which was part of the portfolio of the minister for the Arts and Territories. In 1988, enabling legislation came into effect which formally amalgamated the former Canberra, Bruce and Woden Colleges and the office of the ACT Further Education to form the ACT Institute of TAFE as a statutory authority. Also established under the Act, was the ACT Institute of TAFE Advisory Committee which has a membership of seven who represent private and public industry, unions, community, teaching and student bodies and whose main function is to provide advice to the director of the institute on all matters relating to the functions of the Institute.

In 1989, the Australian Capital Territory became self-governing and responsibility for TAFE was transferred to the new government's minister for industry, employment and education. The ACT Vocational Training Authority replaced the former Apprenticeship Board and has responsibility for the administration and promotion of vocational training for apprentices and the Australian Traineeship Scheme in the ACT. The authority also oversees the ACT and region Industry Training Advisory Boards. In 1990 the ACT Accreditation Agency was formed to supersede the Commonwealth Committee for Accreditation of Tertiary Awards.

7.5 Queensland

In December 1987, the Queensland Government approved the formation of a new department, the Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training (DEVET). This department was made up of the Division of TAFE and Senior Colleges, administered by the minister for education, and the Division of Employment Planning and Training, formerly part of the Department of Employment and Industrial Affairs.

As well as administering the 32 colleges, the new department also had responsibility for the administration of the apprenticeship and Australian Traineeship Systems and for setting and maintaining standards in private training institutions. Also in 1987, the Queensland Government established The Queensland Employment, Vocational Education and Training Board (QEVET) to provide advice to the minister.

Following the change of government and as a result of the rationalisation of State government operations in December 1989, DEVET and the Department of Industrial Affairs were amalgamated to form the Department of Employment, Vocational Education, Training and Industrial Relations (DEVETIR). An interim Bureau of Employment, Vocational Education and Further Education and Training was formed within DEVETIR. This was the first step towards the formation of a new commission. The bureau was responsible for the administration of all TAFE and senior colleges. The head of the bureau was responsible to the minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations on policy matters and to the director-general of DEVETIR for all staff and administrative matters. The head of the bureau was also the chairman of QEVET.

In September 1990, a Green Paper was released on the 'Formation of Technical and Further Education, Training and Employment Commission'⁴ This paper was distributed widely seeking community views on the formation of a commission. Following the analysis of responses, significant changes were made to the administration and organisation of TAFE in Queensland. The basis of these changes was to separate policy from delivery of vocational education and training.

The Vocational Education, Training and Employment Act 1991 was passed in the Queensland Parliament in July 1991. The Act established the Vocational Education, Training and Employment Commission (VETEC) to replace QEVET. The functions of VETEC are:

- *to advise the Minister on the development of frameworks for the State's vocational education, training and employment services;*

- *to advise the Minister on vocational education, training and employment strategies, which will complement State economic and social development;*
- *to determine policy related to regulated training including apprenticeship, traineeship and other training systems;*
- *to determine policy relating to accreditation and ratification;*
- *to confer with and, where it is considered necessary or desirable, extend recognition to other bodies within or outside the State on matters relating to vocational education, training and employment services;*
- *to undertake research in relation to the vocational education, training and employment system;*
- *to advise the minister on curriculum policy formulation;*
- *to advise the minister on capital works planning in relation to the vocational education and training system;*
- *to recognise vocational education and training establishments as approved training organisations; and*
- *to advise the minister on the most effective application of appropriation approved by Parliament for the purpose of vocational education, training and employment services.⁵*

The Act also established three councils under the commission. The first is the State Training Council which is a tripartite body responsible to the commission for all matters related to structured training, in particular apprenticeships and traineeships. The second is the State Planning and Development Council which was set up to provide independent advice to the commission on short- and long-term priorities for vocational education, training and employment services. The third is the Accreditation

Council which has responsibility for all accreditation matters and for providing independent advice to the commission on the quality of vocational education and training. An office of the commission has also been established to support the commission and its councils.

TAFE operations are administered through TAFE•TEQ (TAFE, Training and Employment Queensland) which operates within DEVETIR. TAFE•TEQ's functions fall into the four sub-program areas of foundation education, vocational education and training, labour market and training and delivery services. From 1992, TAFE•TEQ programs are delivered through a regionalised management structure headed by five regional directors.

In addition to the traditional TAFE colleges, Queensland has established three senior colleges at Hervey Bay, Redland and Roma. These were set up to allow the integration of general academic, vocational education and personal enrichment courses for year 11 and 12 high school students. Under the senior college system, students study in a campus-style, adult learning environment.

7.6 South Australia

In 1989, the South Australian Department of TAFE merged with the Office of Employment and Training and the Youth Bureau to form the Department of Employment and TAFE (DETAFE). In 1992, the Office of Tertiary Education has also become part of DETAFE. The department's responsibilities now encompass the State's role in employment programs, training support and higher education policy as well as the operation of the TAFE college system. The minister with responsibility for the Employment and Technical Further Education portfolio, now also has responsibility for the administration of the Industrial and Commercial Training Act and for the Tertiary Education Act.

Legislative authority to approve training programs for declared vocations, traineeships and pre-vocational courses lies with the Industrial and Training Commission. For other award courses, the power of

accreditation is held, under delegation, by the chief executive officer of DETAFE or by the director (Curriculum Services) depending on course length.

The public TAFE system is managed under the TAFE Act and consists of a network of 19 TAFE colleges operating on 67 campuses and through other outreach and access techniques. The educational program is divided into 17 groups, of which 14 are vocational areas and four are preparatory or foundation areas. The management of the educational program is shared between the colleges and the program groups. The colleges are responsible for the delivery of programs within the context of the community they serve, while the program groups provide advice to the department on budgets, resources, curriculum, teaching methodologies and other related matters.

7.7 Western Australia

Following amendments to the Education Act assented to in December 1988, the office of TAFE was established as a separate administrative entity within the Ministry of Education. The executive director of TAFE was named as the designated officer under the Act in respect of TAFE matters. Other changes announced at that time were the devolution of managerial responsibilities to colleges with central office retaining a policy development, strategic planning, resource allocation and monitoring role and the creation of a cluster arrangement for TAFE colleges, evening technical schools and centres, to group small and medium sized institutions into larger, regional TAFE delivery systems. College resource agreements were also introduced as a means of formalising annual budget allocations, facilitating campus management and enabling the process of monitoring achievement of the office's corporate objectives. A separate Department of Technical and Further Education was established in November 1989.

In 1990, the State Employment and Skills Development Authority (SESDA) Act established SESDA as the State's peak training board. The Act also provided for the establishment of a Skills Standards and Accreditation

Board and Industry Employment and Training Councils. Delivery agencies, such as the Department of Employment and Training, the Department of TAFE and the independent colleges are required, through the SESDA Act, to address the needs of industry as identified by the authority and the Industry Employment and Training Council network.

After a fairly short existence, in 1992 the Department of Technical and Further Education was merged with the Department of Employment and Training to form the Department of Employment, Vocational Education and Training (DEVET). The central office of DEVET provides a central focus on policy formulation, planning, resource co-ordination, equity, employment and labour market program co-ordination and curriculum integration. A DEVET council of directors constitutes the senior management group in TAFE and includes a strong contingent of representatives from the colleges.

The authority to deliver TAFE courses has been delegated to four city colleges, four regional colleges and three independent colleges in remote areas. TAFE colleges have been arranged into regional clusters by linking several campuses and centres to form multi-campus institutions. This has reduced the number of metropolitan colleges from a previous 13 to four. This was aimed at enabling greater decentralisation from central office and a more comprehensive regional coverage of the metropolitan and rural areas.

7.8 Tasmania

In 1989, TAFE moved from the Department of Education to become part of the Department of Employment, Industrial Relations and Training (DEIRT). There is also a Training Authority of Tasmania which is a statutory authority and reports directly to the minister. The authority is linked to, but not part of, the department, although officers of the department provide services to it and its committees. The authority is responsible for administering the Commercial and Training Act which prescribes conditions applicable for apprentices and trainees. Procedures are being developed to make the

Authority responsible for accreditation of training courses and registration of private providers.

Administratively the secretary of the department is responsible for the Training Authority of Tasmania and four divisions. These are training, industrial relations and employment services, adult education and corporate services. TAFE college principals are responsible to the general manager, Training. The Policy Management Group of DEIRT consists of the secretary; general manager, Training; director, Adult Education; general manager, Industrial Relations and Employment Services and the general manager, Corporate Services. The Training Division is supported by three branches, Planning and Coordination, Design and Development and Quality Assurance.

Authority to deliver TAFE courses is delegated to the three multi-purpose and one specialist hospitality TAFE colleges. These are Hobart Technical College, Launceston College of TAFE, the North West Regional College of TAFE and Drysdale Hospitality College. Each college has a college council which provides advice to college directors on matters of maintenance, capital expenditure on buildings and equipment and the provision of technical and further education in Tasmania.

7.9 New South Wales

In March 1988, the Liberal Party came to power and immediately set out to change education in New South Wales. On 25 April 1988, the New South Wales minister for education and youth affairs, Dr Terry Metherell, announced the establishment of a 'far-ranging review of management practices' in his portfolio, under the direction of Dr Brian Scott. This review included the Department of Education, the Department of Technical and Further Education and the Ministry of Education and Youth Affairs. The recommendations of the review of

TAFE were released on 15 September 1989 although the full report was not completed or released until mid 1990.

The first report, entitled *TAFE Restructuring*⁶, as well as making a fairly vicious attack on the senior management of TAFE, recommended that TAFE become a statutory authority to be called the TAFE Commission (TAFECOM); TAFE colleges be divided into 24 networks which would become the primary planning, co-ordinating and quality control centres of TAFECOM; the size of the central administration be reduced to less than one-third its current level and ten Industry Training Divisions replace the 25 teaching schools to plan, co-ordinate and contract the production of curricula in line with national and State skill needs and in response to local industry requirements. The report also recommended that the new TAFECOM seek to become 50 per cent self-funding by the end of the century and a subsidiary corporation, to be known as TAFECORP, be established to enable managers to pursue commercial, financial and other direct links with industry. Simultaneously with the release of the recommendations, the minister announced the spill of all senior management positions and the new positions appeared in newspaper advertisements the following day.

The restructuring recommended by the review was aimed at achieving a major devolution of operational responsibilities. It was recommended that the major responsibilities of the new central executive of TAFECOM (the new name proposed for NSW TAFE) should be limited to overall corporate planning, including curriculum and human and physical resource planning and setting performance objectives; financial planning and treasury functions; general management co-ordination, including marketing and development; policy development; overall quality assurance and information systems development and oversight. In line with the devolution of authority, it was proposed that the senior management positions at network level should parallel the senior executive structure in terms of major areas of responsibility. These areas of responsibility were defined as: educational planning and quality assurance; marketing and development; finance and systems and human resources.

By the beginning of 1990, the new senior executive had been appointed and by mid 1990, the training division chiefs and network managers were also in place. In June

1990, the final report of the management review called *TAFE's Commission for the 1990s* was released.⁷ This report fleshed out the recommendations made in the previous report. However the report also showed the lack of knowledge of the review team of the management and administrative functions of TAFE, which led to great gaps being left in the proposed structure. Of particular significance was the failure to recognise the role of the student administration area which not only maintained the student records but also timetabled the State-wide examinations and collated and disseminated student examination results. The review also made no provision for a policy function and planning function.

The main priority during 1990 was to try to complete the restructuring. However it was becoming clear that the process was more complex than acknowledged by either Dr Metherell or Dr Scott and was certainly proving to be more expensive than originally envisaged. The government had originally expected that much of the cost of restructuring would be covered by the sale of land owned by TAFE. However, as the recession progressed and land prices fell, this source of income proved to be insufficient. The same problem occurred with the restructuring of the Department of School Education (re-named after its Scott report⁸) which was to be partly funded by the sale of the head office building which still remains empty.

In 1990, Dr Metherell offered his resignation following the public announcement that he had failed to fill out his taxation form correctly. During his time as minister, education had become a very controversial issue, with the minister managing to alienate not only the Teachers Federation but all the major education interest groups. The Premier took the opportunity of the change in minister to remove TAFE from the education portfolio and place it within a new Department of Industrial Relations, Employment, Training and Further Education (DIRETFE). The new department also included Adult and Community Education (ACE) and the Adult Migrant Education Service (AMES), previously part of the Ministry of Education.

By the time the TAFE Bill was presented to parliament, it had been substantially altered from that published in

Scott's final report. While the new Bill retained the thrust of the Metherell reforms, it represented:

a substantial softening of the original provisions and a significant victory for lobby groups that had fought long and hard to ensure the survival of TAFE's pre-vocational and 'second chance' programs.⁹

The new Act, the Technical and Further Education Act 1990, was passed late in 1990 and proclaimed in February 1991. This established the new TAFE Commission (the name TAFECOM was dropped). Late in 1990, the managing director of TAFE resigned and early in 1991, Dr Gregor Ramsey, chairman of NBEET, was appointed managing director. Although an interim TAFECOM board had operated in 1990, following the proclamation of the new Act, a completely new TAFE Commission Board was appointed. Two other Acts were enacted around the same time. One of these was the Adult and Community Education Act which established a new Board of Adult and Community Education to advise the minister. The other was the Vocational Education and Training Act which established the Vocational Education and Training Accreditation Board (VETAB) as a statutory authority, to oversee all accreditation and articulation between post-secondary skills and training organisations, including in-house and business and industry training.

The combination of a new minister, a new managing director and a new board led to a review of the restructuring. In August 1991, the minister and managing director announced that from the beginning of 1992, TAFE operations were to be based in eight institutes of TAFE and three institutes of technology.¹⁰ Four of the institutes of TAFE were to be in the Sydney metropolitan area and four in the country. The institutes of TAFE would be an interactive system of colleges which would serve a clearly defined geographic area. Each institute would be headed by a director. The institutes of technology were to be based in Sydney, the Hunter and the Illawarra and would differ from the institutes of TAFE in that they would provide a range of programs recognised on a State-wide basis. Shortly after this change was announced, Dr Scott was reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* as having disassociated himself

entirely from the implementation of the TAFE reform program, saying it had lost philosophical direction.

The original ten industry training divisions and the three education training divisions, which had been established in the basic and pre-vocational training area, were to remain and were to retain their State-wide functions but were to be located within the institutes. As the establishment of the institute framework was designed to devolve operational responsibility for program delivery to institute directors, most of the equity units such as the Aboriginal Education Unit, the Multicultural Education Unit and the Women's Unit were transferred from the central support area to the institutes where they also retained their State-wide function. The only unit which remained in central support was the Disabilities Unit which became part of the Student Services Division.

The recasting of central management roles and functions resulted in a restructuring of the central administration. Central support staff numbers were reduced from about 1200 people to fewer than 400. The new central support units are now mostly involved in system-wide strategic planning, co-ordination, capital development, policy, resource allocation and audit.

The formulation and co-ordination of system-wide activities are facilitated by two senior executive committees, The Operations Executive (comprised of the managing director, the deputy managing director, the group general manager resources and a representative of the institute directors) and the Policy Executive (comprised of the operational executive, institute directors and general managers responsible for central support units). At present, the restructuring is still not completed. The new structures for the central office and the institutes are expected to be completed by early 1993 and the new college structures by the end of 1993.

Following the resignation of the Premier, Nick Greiner, in June 1992, the minister for Industrial Relations, Employment, Training and Further Education, John Fahey, became Premier of New South Wales. This led to a ministerial reshuffle in which Virginia Chadwick, the minister for Education and Youth Affairs, also became minister for Employment and Training. This has

effectively returned TAFE and training to the education portfolio.

7.10 Conclusion

Although the restructuring of TAFE by State and Territory governments at first glance shows similarities and common themes, as a result of similar imperatives, in practice the new structures and administrative arrangements show the same diversity that has characterised TAFE systems over the past 100 years. The restructuring, while significantly changing individual TAFE systems, has not made them more alike.

The first similarity in the restructuring has been the tendency for State and Territory Governments (with the exception of the Northern Territory) to move TAFE from the education portfolio and include it in the employment and training portfolio. However, even with consensus of direction, there were significant variations in how TAFE and the training and employment agencies were integrated. These differences are very strongly related to the historical development of technical education in each State and Territory. In general, in States like Queensland and Tasmania, where responsibility for TAFE had remained within the Department of Education before it was changed to employment and training, there has been a much closer integration of the two agencies than in New South Wales where TAFE had been a department in its own right for over forty years. Although now part of the employment and training portfolio, the New South Wales TAFE Commission has a separate Act and although it liaises with the employment and training arm, is operationally and legislatively separate from it. It remains to be seen how the disparate arms of TAFE, employment and training and the Ministry of Education will interact following the recent changes in ministerial portfolios. Other States, such as Tasmania and Western Australia, still have legislative responsibilities under the Education Act, although Tasmanian TAFE is now administratively part of a new employment-focussed department and Western Australia has responsibilities under the SESDA Act. While the Victorian State Training Board has been established under its own Act, a number

of vocational education and training institutions retain their historical and separate identities by still operating under their own acts but work co-operatively with the board.

Another common trend was the move by all TAFE authorities towards commercial activities and revenue raising. The changes to Commonwealth funding arrangements mentioned in the previous chapter, removed the prohibition on charging fees in TAFE for courses undertaken for the purpose of upgrading skills and income. The 1989 guidelines for TAFE funding went further than just removing restrictions and actively encouraged TAFE colleges to adopt a more entrepreneurial role in the provision of services to industry. It was also stated that:

State authorities are implementing arrangements to enable TAFE to retain a major proportion of income generated from fee-for-service activities for developmental purposes. This has represented a fundamental change in some states and puts in place a structure to support increased industry contributions to formal training in TAFE.¹¹

The impetus for increased TAFE involvement in commercial activities also came from State governments which were finding it difficult to provide sufficient funding to meet the demands for TAFE places. Although none went as far as the Scott report did in New South Wales in specifying a target of 50 per cent self-funding, a level which was later agreed to be unachievable, all governments saw the potential for the generation of income through commercial activities. Again, each State and Territory set up different arrangements to facilitate these activities. New South Wales, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory have all established formal, centralised structures for co-ordinating and managing local, State and national commercial activities. Tasmania, Victoria and the Northern Territory colleges have college-based arrangements for these activities, with Victorian colleges actively competing with each other. South Australia and Queensland maintain a decentralised yet basically cross-college approach, operating independently from the colleges with the central office also providing a separate service. Although a number of

States established separate business enterprises as discrete vehicles for commercial activities, this model is no longer supported, although some existing enterprises have been retained.¹² In New South Wales, for example, the Scott recommendation that a subsidiary corporation, to be called TAFECORP be established, was not implemented by the government.

Another area of similarity has been the general move to devolution of authority to the colleges. However, again, different strategies and structures have been used to meet the different characteristics of TAFE in each State. In a number of cases (for example, New South Wales, Western Australia and Queensland) the devolution of operational authority has been accompanied by the combination of individual colleges into larger administrative units. In New South Wales this was first done by the creation of 24 networks. When this proved to be too unwieldy and expensive, the 24 were then amalgamated into the 11 institutes. In Western Australia, colleges in the Perth metropolitan area were amalgamated into four major multi-campus complexes. In Queensland, a system of regions is being introduced, with a senior manager being appointed as regional director. Victoria has retained its system of autonomous colleges and the Northern Territory has also moved to this model.

The late 1980s and the early 1990s have seen the structure and operation of TAFE in all States and Territories changing significantly, with some States suffering several changes of structure within a fairly short time. In most cases these changes reflect the political and economic environments operating at both State and national level rather than specific management or administrative problems which required resolution. The disruption and dislocation caused by these structural and operational changes have also been exacerbated by the fundamental and continual changes in vocational education and training policy, programs, curriculum and delivery modes that are being pushed by the Commonwealth. These will be discussed in the following chapter.

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8 TAFE in the 1990s

8.1 Introduction

The early 1990s have seen the continuation of the implementation of Commonwealth Government policies for training outlined in *Australia Reconstructed* and *Skills for Australia*.

As John Dawkins said:

Following the 1987 Federal Election, I accepted my present portfolio on the understanding that its originally proposed name be rearranged so that the word 'employment' was placed first. I did this in order to emphasise that policies in education and training must be subordinate to the national economic imperative of achieving the optimal employment of our people.¹

This view was not only adopted by the Commonwealth but by most States and Territories who had, by 1991, transferred TAFE from the education to the employment and training portfolios. Although this view had merit in theory, the emphasis on employment and the influence of the training regulators on policy and programs, meant there was a wide gap between the policy makers and the vocational education and training providers, particularly the public sector providers such as TAFE. This gap was exacerbated by the lack of formal representation by TAFE on national advisory bodies such as NBEET. Another problem was that the success of the new policies were dependent on the co-operation and involvement of industry, particularly in award restructuring, development and implementation of competency standards, increased involvement in training and increased productivity. All indications are that, with a few noticeable exceptions, industry has been slow to respond. This will increasingly put much greater pressure on TAFE systems to continue to fill in the gaps in training.

As Robinson points out:

The Commonwealth-induced changes are part of a much wider objective of restructuring industry, with training playing a prominent part in the restructuring process. What is unique to Australia is the use of industrial relations procedures as the instrument for industry restructuring As part of a coherent policy of change, Government efforts have initially been focussed on the introduction of competency-based training, on increased private sector investment in training (to be achieved through the vehicle of the Training Guarantee legislation passed in 1990) and on national consistency in standards (to be achieved through the National Training Board established in 1990).²

There has also emerged an inherent tension about general versus vocational training. In 1988, John Dawkins was quoted as saying:

We've had for years this very fruitless debate about general versus vocational training but now everybody recognises that you need a mixture of both ... More than any time in the past, employers recognise the education system needs to produce—first of all—people with a broad appreciation, capacity to communicate, compute effectively and pick up skills so they can adapt during the course of their lives. Similarly, those who used to be advocates for general education realise that giving people adaptable skills in education is a good thing.³

However, because of the way the training regulators and the National Training Board have designed competency-based training to be implemented by TAFE and other training providers, the outcomes are likely to be the development of a very narrow range of competencies rather than a broad range of transferable skills. The release of the Finn report on *Young People's Participation in Post-Compulsory Education and Training*⁴ in 1991 was to highlight these tensions.

The major events and reports that are at present impacting on TAFE in particular and vocational education in Australia in general, are outlined below.

8.2 The Deveson report

In May 1990, the conference of Commonwealth and State Labour ministers considered a report from the Commonwealth and States Training Advisory Committee (COSTAC) which highlighted the need for additional government funding for training and related issues. The conference decided to establish an independent committee, the Training Costs Review Committee, to review likely future training costs. The committee's report⁵ was released in 1990. The key findings of the report were that award restructuring is expected to have an impact on training costs that is likely to be felt over a timeframe extending to five years rather than the two initially envisaged, and that it is expected to result in a shift in training provision, with higher levels of internally co-ordinated industry-funded training. As unmet demand for TAFE was already high and demand is likely to increase as award restructuring provided benefits to individuals, governments were urged to take action to enable and encourage industry to increase its training effort and to promote high quality and wide acceptance of industry-provided training. However, while recognising the pressures on TAFE, the report added some additional functions by recommending that governments encourage TAFE to increase substantially its role as a provider of a wider range of training services to industry, mainly on a cost recovery basis. The report also called for the establishment of nationally consistent arrangements for training programs to be recognised, accredited and monitored. Appropriate and nationally consistent arrangements for individuals to have their skills recognised, both for the purpose of industrial recognition and for access to further training, should also be made.

Whilst acknowledging that TAFE still had an important role to play in the provision of training, the report advocated a change in the balance of TAFE activities which would increase the proportion of its activities

related to service to industry on a full-cost recovery basis. This would require new, more flexible TAFE staff employment, development and career path arrangements, to both encourage TAFE staff to take part in commercial activity and remain with the TAFE system, as well as financial and administrative arrangements which enable TAFE to compete in the market for training services. It was also recommended that targets should be set for entrepreneurial activity. The report also said that governments needed to commit themselves to a steady increase in the volume of publicly-funded TAFE activity and recommended an increase of five per cent per annum in real terms for the next five years.

In looking at who should pay for training, as well as the making recommendations about the role of government, the committee also considered the responsibilities of industry and individuals. The committee noted that both employers and unions broadly accepted that much of the enterprise-specific training which would occur under award restructuring would be undertaken on-the-job or in-house, and that employers would meet the cost either by delivering their own enterprise-based training program or by purchasing training products from external training providers, including, but not exclusively, TAFE. Another option identified, was for employers to meet the costs of individual workers attending external training courses.

The committee also looked at the issue of fees and charges in TAFE. While recognising that the income benefits to graduates from TAFE are relatively low in comparison to the benefits gained by higher education graduates, the committee felt that this did not represent a case for a TAFE system which did not have fees and charges. However, given the present situation, there was no persuasive case for substantial individual contributions to meet the cost of TAFE. It was also felt that equity problems could arise if substantial fees were set in TAFE colleges without adequate exemption or concession arrangements. However, the committee also found that the current arrangements for fees and charges in TAFE were unsatisfactory and needed to be made more rational, open and equitable. The committee also considered the issue of the introduction of a Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) for TAFE

students, but decided that there were considerable equity and practical problems in introducing such a scheme in TAFE and the cost of training arising out of award restructuring did not warrant the immediate introduction of such arrangements. The committee did recommend the availability of loan funds to assist needy students, akin to those established for higher education students, as this would represent a considerable equity initiative.⁶ This was a matter the Australian Conference of TAFE Directors and individual TAFE systems had been pursuing with the Commonwealth for over five years. Unfortunately, yet again, this recommendation was ignored.

8.3 Establishment of VEETAC

Following the release of the Deveson Report, a second ministerial conference was convened by John Dawkins in November 1990. The main purpose was to discuss the recommendations of the report. The ministers agreed to implement competency-based training; develop integrated curricula for on- and off-the-job training (based on competency standards endorsed by the NTB); establish a national framework for recognition of training; develop a national market for delivery of vocational education and training and establish an integrated entry-level training system.

This meeting also established a new advisory committee, the Vocational Education, Employment and Training Advisory Committee (VEETAC) to replace the Commonwealth State Training Advisory Committee (COSTAC). The meeting also agreed to abolish the Australian Conference of TAFE Directors (ACTD). VEETAC was established to report to the ministers of Vocational Education, Employment and Training (MOVEET), which replaced the Ministers of Labour Advisory Council (MOLAC). Following the release of the Finn Report which involved both MOVEET and the AEC, and because there is now some overlap between the responsibilities of ministers for Education and ministers for Employment and Training, there has been a tendency to have joint AEC-MOVEET meetings and to establish joint working parties.

The first meeting of VEETAC was held in November 1990. The Commonwealth took firm hold of the agenda by securing the chair of the committee and providing the secretariat. At the first meeting it was decided to establish a number of working parties or steering committees to carry forward decisions of the November special ministerial conference, recommendations of the Training Costs Review Committee, work previously undertaken by the former COSTAC working parties and work undertaken by the ACTD.

Following the Deveson report recommendations, a working party was established to look at the National Recognition of Training. The working party developed a national framework for the accreditation of vocational education and training courses; the determination of credit transfer between training programs and award courses; the registration of training providers of such programs and courses; the recognition of prior learning and the assessment of competencies. This framework was endorsed by MOVEET for progressive implementation from 1992. During the course of its work in developing the framework, the working party identified a need to align training credentials with the NTB's Australian Standards Framework. A project for the national alignment of credentials is currently under way. The aim of the project is to:

... nominally align vocational education and training credentials to the Australian Standards Framework in order to:

- *facilitate the establishment of a single system of vocational education and training awards, nomenclature and classification;*
- *enable the production of a set of accreditation guidelines, linked to the Australian Standards Framework, for use by State/Territory accreditation authorities; and*
- *develop/improve pathways between the vocational education, training, secondary and higher education sectors.*

VEETAC also established a working party on the implementation of competency-based training to develop implementation plans, timetables and options for

resourcing the process. To date, the operational plan has been developed and endorsed by ministers and a discussion paper on 'assessment for CBT' has been released.

A national project is currently under way, under the auspices of the VEETAC working party on staffing issues, called 'Staffing for the 21st Century.' This project is looking at the implications of the major shifts that are occurring in vocational education and training in order to determine the impact on TAFE staff and what response will be required from TAFE human resource management. It is also developing a framework for competency standards for TAFE teachers.

Some of the ACTD working parties were continued but with wider representation. These were the Australian Committee on TAFE Curriculum (now the Australian Committee of Training Curriculum —ACTRAC) and the Joint Committee on TAFE Statistics—JCTAFES (now Committee on TAFE and Training Statistics—COTTS). The membership of both of these was extended to include membership from industry and training. The terms of reference were also extended so ACTRAC included development of national core curricula for other training providers and COTTS included statistics for all vocational education and training. Although ACTD had been abolished, it was recognised that there was still a need for the chief executive officers of TAFE to meet as a group to discuss operational issues and a TAFE Operations and Co-ordination Committee (TOCC), now called the National TAFE Chief Executives Committee (NTCC), was established as a standing committee of VEETAC.

Although VEETAC has had some success in encouraging the development of national frameworks and undertaking national projects, the main problem that has emerged, is that it has become very unwieldy (and expensive) because of the ever-increasing number of working parties and committees. There is a great need for a review, and streamlining of the structure if it is to hope to be effective. The recent announcement of the establishment of an Australian National Training Authority will very likely lead to a review of VEETAC's functions and operations.

8.4 The Finn report

At its 59th meeting in October 1988, the Australian Education Council (AEC), agreed to establish a working party on links between schools and TAFE. The report of the working party was considered by ministers at the 62nd meeting of the AEC in June 1990. One of the resolutions was to form a small group of officials to develop an issues paper and to recommend an agenda for the national review of post-compulsory education and training. Having considered the issues paper, at the 63rd Meeting (December 1990), ministers established a further committee, with an independent chair (Mr T B Finn), to undertake a further review of the future development of post-compulsory education and training in Australia.

The major issues the review committee was asked to consider, included:

- *the appropriate form and level of a new national target for participation in post-compulsory education and training, an appropriate basis of measurement of that target, and a recommended timetable and strategies for its achievement;*
- *appropriate national curriculum principles designed to enable all young people to develop key competencies;*
- *the means by which links can be drawn between different education and training pathways and sectors to expand the options available to young people and to achieve national coherence in entry and exit points between education, training and employment; and*
- *the appropriate roles and responsibilities of schools, TAFE and higher education in the provision of post-compulsory education and training for young people.*

The major theme of the report was the fact that general and vocational education, and work and learning, are too sharply divided in traditional Australian attitudes and practice. Both industry and individual needs are leading

towards a convergence of general and vocational education and the concepts of work and education. This implies that both schools and TAFE will need to change: schools to become more concerned with issues of employability and the provision of broad vocational education; TAFE to recognise that initial vocational courses must increasingly be concerned with competencies that are more general than those which, for example, characterised the traditional craft-based apprenticeships.⁶

Within this broad context, the committee recommended the adoption of a new national completion and participation target that, by the year 2001, 95 per cent of 19 year olds should have completed year 12, or an initial post-school qualification or be participating in formally-recognised education or training. The committee also asked AEC-MOVEET to endorse six key areas of competence deemed to be essential for all young people engaged in post-compulsory education and training. These were:

- *Language and communication;*
- *Mathematics;*
- *Scientific and technological understanding;*
- *Cultural understanding;*
- *Problem solving; and*
- *Personal and interpersonal competencies.*

The report recommended that all post-compulsory education and training programs for the 15-19 age cohort should include, with their overall expected outcomes, appropriate levels of competence in these six key areas.

The report also recommended that MOVEET should continue to give high priority to reform of current entry-level training arrangements as a key step in achieving the proposed national completion and participation targets and that governments should agree to introduce a post-compulsory education and training guarantee whereby all young people would be guaranteed a place in school or TAFE after year 10 for two years of full-time education or training or its equivalent part-time for three years. As these recommendations had considerable implications for both schools and TAFE, the report suggested that all States and Territories review their

policies and practices at the school-TAFE interface with a view to maximising credit transfer and articulation between the sectors. They should also define clearly the respective roles of schools and TAFE in the provision of education and training for young people in the immediate post-compulsory period. The recommendations relating to the setting of national participation targets and the introduction of a training guarantee appear to follow the British system of a youth guarantee and to be aimed at achieving the participation rates of the German dual system and the Swedish upper secondary system.

These recommendations were accepted at the joint AEC-MOVEET meeting in 1991. The meeting established another committee, the Mayer committee, to develop employment-related key areas of competence in post-compulsory education and training for young people and to establish agreed national standards for these key areas. A discussion paper released by the Mayer committee stated that the key competency structures would identify the aspects of competence within each of the areas and describe the meaning of competence within each aspect at a number of agreed levels. A variety of methods would be used to assess the key competencies as the most appropriate method will differ from one competency to another. A framework for this diversity would be provided by a set of agreed principles and supporting materials. There would also be a need to provide supporting documentation to accompany the key structures to show how the development of competencies could be undertaken using a range of content and in different contexts.

A challenge for TAFE will be how to integrate these key competencies, with the competency standards being developed by the NTB for specific occupations and industries.

8.5 The Carmichael report

The latest of the key reports was released in March 1992. In August 1991, the minister for Employment, Education and Training, John Dawkins, asked the Employment and

Skills Formation Council (ESFC) to consult with groups and individuals on four related issues. These were:

- *a new entry-level training system for Australia;*
- *the TAFE systems in the 1990s;*
- *Commonwealth subsidies for employers under the CRAFT (apprenticeship) and Australian Traineeship System (ATS); and*
- *allowances for education and training, including the possible extension of AUSTUDY to part-time students and people being trained by private providers of education.*

The ESFC was also asked to take into consideration changes proposed in the Finn report. The basis for the consultations were two documents called *A New Structured Entry-Level Training System for Australia*,⁹ and *TAFE in the 1990s: Developing Australia's Skills*,¹⁰

The main recommendation of the 'Carmichael report'¹¹ was the establishment of a competency-based Australian Vocational Certificate System. The main feature of the system is the merging of apprenticeships and traineeships into the new Australian Vocational Certificate Training System, which would provide a flexible range of fully articulated, substantially work-based, training pathways. The scheme also proposed that the current award wage rates for young people be replaced by trainee wages. Thus payment for training time should be based on the level of competence attained, the amount of time spent on the job in structured training or productive work and the value of the competencies demonstrated by the trainee on the job, calculated as the proportion of the wage of a fully competent worker.

Like the Finn report, the scheme also set targets for participation and proposed that, by 2001, the new system should provide flexible delivery arrangements to meet the training participation targets of 90 per cent completing year 12, 90 per cent attaining NTB level 2 vocational certificates and 60 per cent attaining level 3 certificates or higher qualifications. To meet these

targets, it was recommended that there should be the development of more vocational options in years 11-12, more extensive use of contextual learning methods, the nation-wide development of public and private senior colleges to provide more mature learning environments for delivery of upper-secondary programs and improved careers education.

TAFE's future role was recommended as being to develop as institutions with a predominant (but not exclusive) focus upon advanced vocational education and training, from ASF certificate level 2 up to diploma level. As well, closely linked networks of senior colleges, TAFE colleges and private and community providers of off-the-job training should be developed for the flexible delivery of vocational education and training. These networks should be supported by framework agreements in each State and Territory and any costs incurred by any students in vocational courses up to the completion of year 12 being paid by State or Territory governments under the Youth Guarantee. It was also suggested that students who completed year 12 could undertake a 'vocational year' (year 13) delivered by TAFE or senior colleges. In addition, it was recommended that all labour market program guidelines should be reviewed and all publicly funded labour market programs should articulate into formal mainstream vocational certificate training, except where it is demonstrably not appropriate for particular clients. Following the release of this report, VEETAC established a working party to further consider the report's recommendations and to provide advice to MOVEET.

The Carmichael report model of entry-level training appears to have been very strongly influenced by both the German dual system of vocational education and training and the Swedish upper secondary schools. The proposals for the combination of work and vocational education in a wide range of occupations and the introduction of a training allowance or wage, rather than the current apprenticeship or traineeship wage, is a direct replication of the German system, while the emphasis on retention rates in schools and the development of senior colleges seems quite similar to the Swedish system. If this is indeed the case, it is hoped that Australian industry and business will show the same high level of

commitment to the vocational education and training of 15-19 year olds as is provided by German and Swedish industry. Whether or not the new system is feasible will depend on whether industry will support it and on whether the ACTU will agree to the proposal for a 'training wage'.

The proposed Australian Vocational Certificate System is not an educational program but an economic and industrial relations strategy. As a recent newspaper article pointed out:

Above all the Carmichael Report advocates the re-regulation of the Australian industrial relations system. If its proposals are accepted, training will become part of the Accord process.¹²

This view is explicitly stated in the foreword to the report which says:

... this report is not a response to youth unemployment in the current recession. It is much more a response to the structural changes in industry and the labour market which are shaping our future for decades to come.¹³

In view of this statement, it is ironic that following the July 1992 Youth Summit, the Keating Government is funding pilot programs of the scheme as a major part of its package to assist unemployed youth.

8.6 Commonwealth funding of TAFE

One of the working parties established by VEETAC to follow the Special Premiers' Conference issues, was the Training and Labour Market Programs working party. This working party submitted a report to VEETAC which provided a number of options for Commonwealth funding arrangements for TAFE, one of which was for the Commonwealth to provide full funding of TAFE.

In October 1991, the minister for Employment, Education and Training, John Dawkins, unveiled a proposal that the Commonwealth Government assume full financial

responsibility for TAFE and other post-secondary education and training. The Commonwealth Government would take control over policy but leave administrative responsibility with the States. The States would also retain responsibility for funding TAFE courses to the equivalent of year 12.

There was an immediate but negative reaction from State ministers. Although they acknowledged the need for increased funding, they said that as it was the effects of the Commonwealth's economic policies which had led to the recession and, in particular, the high level of unemployment that was putting pressure on State and Territory TAFE systems, if the Commonwealth had the money available, it should immediately be allocated to the States. At a joint meeting on 18 October 1991, AEC and MOVEET agreed to give further consideration to this proposal and established a working party to consider all options for the assignment of future financial responsibilities between the Commonwealth and States in education and training. The working party was also asked to assess both the short- and long-term implications of the Finn committee targets for 15-19 year olds. The report of the working party highlighted the need for additional funding to enable TAFE to meet the unprecedented level of demand which would need to be satisfied nationally by governments in 1992 and successive years.

The proposal for the Commonwealth to fully fund TAFE, was included in the Prime Minister's economic statement (called 'One Nation') of February 1992. This statement proposed a comprehensive package for the establishment of a new system of vocational education and training. The package included the proposal that the Commonwealth would take full funding responsibility for vocational education and training, including the transformation of TAFE into a new and expanded system of institutes of vocational education. The Commonwealth would also seek the involvement of the States, industry and training providers to address the emerging needs of industry for advanced training for high level technicians. The package also proposed a process of reform to entry-level training arrangements (that is, the implementation of the Carmichael report's Australian Vocational Certificate) which would involve

the Commonwealth, the States and Territories, the industrial parties and training providers. Funding would also be provided to open more apprenticeship and traineeship places for young people, to further stimulate the growth of skilled training opportunities for young people through the provision of additional pre-vocational training places, additional funding for group training schemes and 'at-risk' apprentices; and to expand labour market program places. The provision of an additional \$720 million for TAFE over the 1993-95 triennium was dependent on the proposal to fully fund TAFE. This was to be discussed and negotiated bilaterally with the States. However, many States, particularly the smaller States, expressed their concern over the whole matter of Commonwealth-State funding arrangements.

In a surprise move, the Prime Minister, Paul Keating announced in an interview on a Sunday morning current affairs television program on 31 May 1992, that if the States would not agree to the Commonwealth taking over funding and control of TAFE the Commonwealth would set up its own vocational and training system. This stand was softened later in the week when the Prime Minister proposed interim funding arrangements which meant that the States would continue to fund their TAFE systems for the next three years. He also softened the threats made on national television, to use the \$720 million in One Nation funds earmarked for TAFE to build a 'parallel' network of vocational education and training centres.¹⁴

The Premiers' Conference held on 12 June 1992 did not resolve any of these issues. Not only was there conflict between the Commonwealth and the States and Territories but also between States. New South Wales and Victoria fought for a greater share of revenue and for a change in the formula to a per capita basis as they stated that they had been subsidising the smaller States for years. The smaller States wanted to maintain the existing formula of 'fiscal equalisation' as it was aimed at ensuring that all citizens were treated on an equal level. As a compromise, the Prime Minister agreed to increase the Commonwealth Government's initial offer from \$150 million to \$166 million, with the additional \$16 million being divided up between New South Wales and Victoria. This ensured that both New South Wales and

Victoria received what they wanted on a per capita basis while the other States received what was due to them under the Grants Commission formula. Overall, the Commonwealth Government raised its general payments to the States by 5.9 per cent. These measures did not satisfy New South Wales or Victoria who claimed they were still subsidising the other States. The New South Wales Premier, Nick Greiner, immediately announced a significant increase in State taxes and charges.

The battle over TAFE funding has been part of the whole issue of the 'vertical fiscal imbalance' of the Commonwealth collecting the revenue and States providing most of the services, and 'horizontal fiscal imbalance' between the States. The TAFE funding issue appears to have been used as a test case in the power play between the Commonwealth and the States and Territories and is another example of the intrusion of politics into education.

At the Premiers' Conference, the Prime Minister announced that he was convening a Youth Summit in July 1992 to discuss measures to address the unacceptably high levels of youth unemployment. He also reaffirmed his intention to restructure the TAFE system. The Premier of Victoria, Joan Kirner, put forward an alternative proposal for the reorganisation of TAFE by suggesting the establishment of a tripartite body of industry and State and Commonwealth representatives to run a national TAFE system. The Commonwealth and States would notionally buy 'equity' in the authority through the contribution of existing funding plus the extra Commonwealth money. It was suggested that the States' contributions could be debited against their current financial assistance grants. This would overcome the problem of States' resistance to the change in State and Commonwealth funding arrangements which was one of the stumbling blocks to the States' accepting the One Nation offer.

The establishment of an Australian National Training Authority (ANTA) was subsequently announced the day before the Youth Summit. A key feature of the new arrangements would be agreed goals, objectives and priorities established through a ministerial council. Under this agreement, ANTA would be established to

plan and fund the national vocational training system and provide policy advice to the council. State Training Agencies would implement strategic plans consistent with a national strategic plan developed with direct input from industry.

It was agreed that the States and Commonwealth would jointly fund the national training system through ANTA with States maintaining their financial effort on an ongoing basis. The Commonwealth would not only maintain its current effort but would also add the \$720 million announced in the 'One Nation' statement in February 1992. All growth funding for 1993 would be allocated on a proportional basis in accordance with population shares. The Commonwealth also agreed to meet ANTA's running costs.

8.7 Labour market programs

As a result of the recession and the subsequent increase in the level of unemployment, the early 1990s have seen the introduction of yet another wave of labour market programs. In the February 1990 economic statement, the government announced a package of measures known as the Active Employment Strategy, to address the problem of the long-term unemployed.

The fourth part of the package was the reform of vocational education and training. This included the 'historic Commonwealth-State-Territory agreement on the establishment of a new national vocational education and training system announced on 21 July 1992'¹⁵ and the provision of \$43.6 million over three years to develop the infrastructure essential 'to underpin the changeover to' the Carmichael report's Australian Vocational Certificate training system. This funding would allow for:

- *development of the competency-based system of training;*
- *assistance in the development of industry training plans;*

- *expansion of assistance to industry to facilitate the changeover to the new system;*
- *development of the capacity of Group Training Companies to broker the provision of work experience and training opportunities in all vocational pathways; and*
- *a contribution towards the professional development of teachers and trainers in the delivery of vocational competencies in the training sector, with particular focus at this stage on the TAFE and training sector.¹²*

The 1992-3 Commonwealth budget, brought down on 18 August 1992, added even more labour market programs to the current array and increased the number of places in existing programs. These measures, which were additional to those announced following the Youth Summit, included a new program costing \$91.9 million over three years to provide 14 000 places for the older unemployed to undertake 26 weeks of training full-time or 35 weeks, part-time; an additional 10 000 places in 1992-3 and an additional 6000 Jobskills places. As well, \$7.3 million is to be allocated to provide literacy training in the workplace for 7000 workers and \$14.7 million in 1992-3 for English as a second language places for workers from non-English-speaking backgrounds.

As the main impact of the National Employment and Training Plan and the budget initiatives is to be felt in 1993, implementation of such a wide range of programs will put enormous pressures on all vocational and education training providers as, once again, there is a very short lead-time to implement major programs.

8.8 Review of student income support arrangements

Part of the debate about vocational education and training over the past ten years has been concerned with who should pay for the increased levels of education and training. The introduction of the Training Guarantee was a means of forcing industry to contribute more. The introduction of the Higher Education Administration Charge (HEAC) and then the Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) was a means of getting individuals to contribute to the costs of their education. Within TAFE, most systems have introduced fees and charges. In addition, most of the reports mentioned in this chapter have made comments or recommendations with regard to Austudy. These moves led to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training being asked to inquire into, and report on, student financial assistance.

The committee tabled its report in March 1991, and made a number of recommendations, both in terms of policy and administration. As a result, some changes were made in the 1991-92 Commonwealth budget, notably the revision of the criteria to enable students enrolled at accredited private colleges and universities to be eligible; changes to the progress rules and the removal of the living away from home allowance from secondary Austudy.

In July 1991, the minister for Higher Education and Employment Services announced that the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) would undertake a systematic review of Austudy. Part of this review was a study by the National Union of Students (NUS) on TAFE Students: Representation and Welfare and a commissioned study by Dr Bruce Chapman on the appropriateness of the objectives of student support and options for future schemes.¹⁷

The NUS study found that an analysis of existing statistics related to the nature and characteristics of TAFE students reflects the fact that the TAFE sector as a whole serves a very broad range of education and training needs. In direct contrast to higher education, the TAFE

student population as a whole is a diverse population of different ages, study modes, backgrounds and aspirations. These factors led NUS to conclude that there was no such thing as 'the average TAFE student'.¹⁸ While the survey found that entry level training programs are utilised by students proceeding straight from school as well as unemployed young people, an analysis of data indicated that a student's background is a significant factor in determining the outcomes they want from their courses. About 50 per cent of students said that they wished to use their qualifications to enter full-time employment. These were equally divided between those who had proceeded straight from school and those who had previously been unemployed. Of those students who wished to continue further education and training, the students straight from school indicated a clear preference for higher education, while students who had been unemployed preferred to continue in a TAFE course. The survey also found that full-time employment forms the major source of income for 37 per cent of students, 23 per cent of students rely on Austudy as their major source of income and only 17 per cent of students rely on parents as their major source of income.

These findings highlight the diversity of the TAFE student population and consequently the fact that what may be appropriate for secondary or higher education students is not necessarily appropriate for TAFE students. For TAFE more than any other sector, there needs to be a greater range of income support arrangements to enable people to access and complete vocational education and training programs.

At the beginning of 1992, Dr Chapman's draft report was released. This was greeted by cries of outrage from students as some of the options identified were loans, either commercial or income contingent. The draft report also completely ignored TAFE students. This was redressed in the final report, which contained a chapter on TAFE and 22 recommendations specifically related to TAFE. The main theme of the report was the need for better targeting of Austudy and more options to provide a greater choice and greater access to income support. Measures identified included the lowering of the age of independence from 25 years to either 21 or 18 years, changes to the Marginal Adjusted Family Income (MAFI),

changes to the personal income level and increases in the level of Austudy. One of the options was that of the provision of income-contingent loans to supplement Austudy. The report also recommended the provision of emergency financial assistance for TAFE students, similar to that provided for higher education students, and funds to be provided to institutions for them to allocate according to need.

As presented in the report, the options have the potential to provide a greater range of sources of income, particularly to those who are not eligible for Austudy on the grounds of parental or spouse income and to provide a bridge for students who leave social security benefits to enter full-time education and training. As lack of adequate financial support constitutes the greatest barrier to access and completion of educational programs, an improvement in income support arrangements is an important means of achieving government policies for increasing the skill levels of the labour force.

The 1992-3 Commonwealth budget announced some changes to Austudy, in line with the Chapman report. The level of personal income able to be received before affecting Austudy, was raised from \$5000 per year to \$6000 (not the \$8000 proposed in the Chapman report) and students would be able to trade-in all or part of their Austudy grant for an income-contingent loan. Unfortunately the budget did not include emergency financial assistance for TAFE students.

Although the changes announced were an improvement, they did not go far enough and yet, again, only played around the margins. Considering the many millions spent on short-term, narrow-skills labour market program which only provide a short-term political solution to the current high levels of unemployment, a better investment in Australia's economic future would have been to undertake the major review of income support arrangements proposed by Chapman. This had the potential of enabling larger numbers of people to take advantage of the longer-term, broad-based, higher-level training courses which have much better prospects for long-term employment.

8.9 Conclusion

TAFE, once again, is going through a period of change and uncertainty. Once more, it is being expected to meet the ever increasing, and often contradictory demands for vocational education and training. The past three years have been dominated by the competency-based training movement and, as the latest Commonwealth Government package of reforms has shown, vocational education and training will continue to be dominated by CBT for the foreseeable future. However, as the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Employment, Education and Training has pointed out:

Although there are these clear cut advantages to competency-based training, it must be recognised that these advantages are not without cost. The move to competency-based training requires a revision of all curricula as well as other teaching materials and delivery mechanisms. This is being done State by State and is an expensive and protracted process.¹⁹

This report also points out some others problems with CBT. For example, if CBT is linked with self-paced learning, it is likely to cause difficulties for people with low literacy levels and it is still unclear how the assessment of off- and on-the-job training will be integrated. In addition, small employers may have difficulty in providing broad practical work which many courses may require and there is a reluctance by many large companies to adopt CBT because of the cost.

Although there is merit in the concept of competency-based training, the monolithic system established in Australia to implement CBT is likely to collapse under its own weight and complexity. As a result of the length of time it is taking to develop competency standards, national curriculum development has had to proceed without them. The development of the modules is proving to be extremely expensive. The system is based on workplace assessment of prior learning and competencies but as yet little has been done to develop the assessment procedures. Even more importantly, there is little indication that industry as a whole,

particularly small employers, will be prepared to participate in the new scheme. It is already becoming clear that the development of the modules, support materials and assessment procedures for the Finn report's key competencies is also going to be a lengthy and expensive process.

Concerns are now starting to be expressed about the enthusiastic adoption of competency-based training as the model for vocational education and training in Australia. One criticism is that it is:

... rooted in the same tradition of industrial behaviourism that produced Taylorism, the so-called scientific theory of factory output measurement and production organisation that led to endemic unhappiness and confrontation between management and employees in Western economies this century.²⁰

Competency-based training is another example of the vocational education and training system being run by an industrial relations agenda. Perhaps the major flaw is the lack of fundamental research to support the anecdotal evidence of its benefits. As Butterworth points out:

Almost as deafening as the clamour surrounding these developments is the silence that accompanies its critical appraisal. Can such a system be so good it escapes serious analysis? Are its benefits so demonstrably great that its costs can be disregarded? And, most importantly, is it the direction in which the Australian vocational education and system should be heading?²¹

Although the Finn and Carmichael reports' recommendations for a 'Youth Guarantee' with the costs incurred by students being paid by governments sounds reasonable, care would need to be taken that the scheme did not inadvertently disadvantage young people. A recent British report²² claims that more than 1000 teenagers a week are suffering severe hardship because of the failure of the British Government to guarantee a training place for all under 18 year olds. General entitlement to income support for under 18 year olds was withdrawn in 1988 on the basis that youth training places

would be available to all. However, more than half the Training and Enterprise Councils admitted, in autumn 1991, that they were not meeting the Guarantee. If Australia is to follow suit and introduce a Youth Guarantee, it will be essential to ensure that existing income support entitlements either through Austudy, social security benefits or wages remain available to young people.

Although over the years there have been suggestions within the former Commonwealth Department of Employment and Industrial Relations and its successor, the Department of Employment, Education and Training for changes to the funding arrangements for TAFE, the catalyst for the recent proposals was the publication of the Finn review with its target of 95 per cent of students continuing on in post-compulsory education and training. The then minister for Employment, Education and Training, John Dawkins, made it clear that he expected TAFE to play a key role in the implementation of the Finn review and that he saw the radical restructuring of the TAFE sector as the principal reform of the post-compulsory education and training sector.

Following the release of the Finn report, there was what the *Financial Review* referred to as an 'ongoing tussle between universities and TAFE for control of the influential reform agenda for Australia's entire tertiary education system'. In a newspaper article entitled 'New South Wales TAFE forgetting its place', the president of the Australian Vice-Chancellors Committee (AVCC) Professor Ken McKinnon, was quoted as accusing the New South Wales TAFE system of making a 'clumsy and wholly undesirable attempt to re-establish the binary system' in tertiary education. He also stated that the AVCC was willing to give its general support to the Finn review provided it 'did not mean a bleeding of higher education funds away from universities'. As part of the restructuring of post-compulsory education and training, the new minister for Employment, Education and Training, Kim Beazley, has asked NBEET to provide advice on the 'Balance of growth between the sectors'. NBEET is proposing that growth funds be subject to tender by all sectors of education. This proposal adds an extra complexity to the debate and, if adopted, would contribute to destabilisation of systems, as there would

be no guarantee of sufficient funding to support core functions.

At the beginning of the early 1990s, TAFE systems across Australia are going through a period of uncertainty. The instabilities caused by the internal restructuring that has been occurring over the past five years has been exacerbated by the constant, and changing pressures by governments and industry for TAFE to increase its provision in a variety of ways. As well as the pressure of unmet demand for courses, caused in part by increased retention rates in schools but mainly by the recession, there are the additional demands created by the move to competency-based training, the calls for increased commercial activity, both as a means of generating revenue and to assist industry improve its training, and the need to strengthen relationships between other sectors of education and training in order to create more and better pathways for young people. To this has been added the proposed establishment of ANTA and the need to provide an array of new courses for the new labour market programs announced in the National Employment and Training Plan and the 1992-3 Commonwealth Budget.

The 1990s are likely to be difficult years for TAFE as it strives to meet the ever-increasing and constantly changing demands for vocational education and training.

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9 Future directions

The past two decades have seen immense changes in TAFE in Australia. Not only has it more than doubled in size, but it has also developed a national focus. The Kangan report marked the turning point in TAFE's history. For the first time, technical education, under its new name TAFE, was given an ideology and charter which gave it a much higher status within the education sector. The acceptance of the recommendations of the report also gave TAFE access to Commonwealth funds for both recurrent purposes and capital works. This funding not only enabled TAFE to expand but also improved the quality of its provision through funding for new buildings, libraries, curriculum development, staff development and research and development.

The last decade has seen the development of national systems of course classification, nomenclature of awards, statistical collection and reporting and the development of national core curricula. Over the past two years, agreement has been reached on national recognition of training and a project commenced on the development of a new national system of credentials. However, this has not resulted in the States and Territories adopting similar structures. Despite some superficial changes in titles, all have retained a distinctive structure that reflects their historical differences.

At the beginning of the 1990s, TAFE is again facing immense challenges and pressures. Although it is impossible to accurately foretell the future, it seems safe to predict that the era of change is not yet over and that the next decade will be a time of instability as TAFE systems attempt to meet the continually increasing demands for vocational education and training in a sluggish economic climate and with funding constraints.

The challenges which face TAFE include the demands, both financial and educational, of the implementation of competency-based training; the provision of additional places and new programs to meet the increasing numbers of 15-19 years who are expected to continue in

post-compulsory education and training; the introduction of a new entry-level training system; the pressure to increase revenue through commercial activities and fees and charges and the need to identify existing, new and emerging training needs of industry and to develop and deliver appropriate courses to meet these needs. In addition, TAFE will need to battle to maintain the identity and status that has taken over 100 years to develop.

The two major problems that governments will need to resolve and that will require the involvement of TAFE, are the problems of high levels of unemployment and the need to improve productivity in industry, particularly in the manufacturing sector.

Youth unemployment has become an endemic problem and it is only in the last few years that people have begun to acknowledge that it is not a cyclical economic problem but a structural problem. Since the early 1970s, the pattern of youth employment has changed significantly, with opportunities for full-time employment decreasing and young peoples' participation in the labour market increasingly being in part-time employment. The number of teenagers in full-time employment has fallen from 58 per cent in August 1966 to 28 per cent in August 1990.¹ As a proportion of the total teenage population, those in part-time jobs have increased from 3.5 per cent in August 1966 to 20 per cent in August 1990.²

The recommendations in the Finn review and Carmichael reports recognise the need for young people to be encouraged to remain in the education and training system to gain vocational skills in areas where there are employment opportunities. All sectors of education will need to co-operate with each other and with business and industry to provide a diversity of opportunities, multiple pathways and entry and exit points and new and flexible combinations of school, TAFE, university and work experience.

The high profile of youth unemployment has to a large extent overshadowed the equally important problem, caused by the current recession, of the large numbers of the older unemployed. Although this was recognised in the recent Commonwealth Government budget, the

solutions proposed are again the short-term ones of six month labour market programs. This approach makes no attempt to identify whether the causes of the increased levels of unemployment for the over 40s is cyclical or structural and therefore whether the new programs being provided are going to have any long-term effect. This is also a flaw in the Liberal-National Party's package. This affects TAFE's ability to provide effective vocational education and training programs.

Much has been said over the past five years of the need to improve productivity in industry, improve the skill levels of the Australian workforce, remove restrictive work practices and technologically update the manufacturing industry. However progress has been slow. In general, the large enterprises have had a good record in investment in training. However, a feature of Australian industry is the large number of medium to small businesses. The training guarantee was designed to put pressure on large and medium size enterprises to improve their training performance. Again, progress in this appears to be slow. TAFE can only provide the appropriate vocational education and training opportunities to meet industry's skill requirements with the co-operation of industry. There is a great need for business and industry to articulate their requirements and work with TAFE in developing programs to meet these needs. In addition, the success of the proposed new system of entry-level training will be dependent on all sectors of industry and both small and large enterprises, providing employment opportunities for trainees.

These problems are not unique to Australia. A recent article in the *European Journal of Education* states that 'post-compulsory education and training (PCET) is a hot topic in all the European Community's twelve member states and rapid change is as evident in continental systems as in the U.K.'³ The range of concerns shared by EC countries include how to increase participation in PCET and higher education and achieve quality provision for the extra numbers and how to ensure that education and training responds to the rapidly changing nature of work, particularly with regard to the flexible leading edges of the economy. The EC has recognised the need to upgrade and broaden vocational training in

line with these changes and to enhance the integration of academic and vocational curricula, but is still to determine how to most effectively balance central and local control and determine the relative weights of public and private responsibilities.

These are all issues currently facing PCET in Australia. As Australia has a history of looking to overseas countries for models, although not necessarily implementing them, it is interesting to note that the EC states are looking at the possibility of a common system of PCET across Europe, while Australia is looking at a common national system. The article points out the extreme heterogeneity of PCET traditions in different EC states, as each country has its own unique system which is the product of different national histories and of divergent cultural, economic and political patterns. To a lesser extent this is also true of Australia although people in each State and Territory at least have a common language and a similar cultural background. While recognising the manifest obstacles to greater integration of education and training across Europe, Green identifies a number of areas where different national reform trajectories seem to be on a convergent path. For example, most countries are now accepting the desirability of closer links between education providers and the world of work and between general education and work-related training. Countries are also looking at how to break down the divisions between the academic and the vocational tracks and so increase choice and flexibility in the systems. There is also debate about the relative responsibilities of the public and private sectors for PCET, with the pattern in most EC countries being for PCET to remain a public responsibility tightly regulated through the state but with different social partners playing important and clearly-defined roles.

These issues are all being debated in Australia now and are all impacting on TAFE systems. In recent times progress has been made in reducing the barriers between the various sectors of education. Initiatives that have helped reduce some of the barriers between schools and TAFE have included the development of joint secondary schools-TAFE programs; the establishment of senior high schools; the establishment and sharing of joint facilities and the joint development and publication of credit

arrangements for the Higher School Certificate and TAFE by the New South Wales Board of Studies and the TAFE Commission. Most States and Territories have now established articulation and credit transfer arrangements between TAFE and universities. Victoria and the Northern Territory now have joint TAFE-university institutions. In New South Wales, there are joint facilities being developed with TAFE and the University of Western Sydney at Werrington and Richmond, the University of New England at Coffs Harbour and Newcastle University at Ourimbah. Also in New South Wales, a consortium of TAFE, the Department of School Education, the Catholic Schools Association and the University of Western Sydney is preparing a submission to take over the navy facility, HMAS Nirimba, for development as a multi-sector educational institution. In many States and Territories, universities and TAFE colleges are working together to develop joint courses whereby students undertake one or two years of study in a TAFE college and then proceed to a university for two years to complete their degrees. In a future where demands for post-secondary education places will be high and resources constrained, these sorts of co-operative arrangements are going to be increasingly important in providing a greater range of opportunities and multiple pathways.

All TAFE systems are looking at the development and introduction of new and more flexible delivery systems. These not only include the use of technology and open learning systems for delivery of vocational education and training, but also delivery of programs in the workplace or other off-site venues. It is expected that over the next decade there will be considerable changes in how and where TAFE courses will be delivered.

If Australia is to come to terms with the post-compulsory education demands identified earlier, there needs to be a cultural shift in perceptions of education. This would involve:

... community and industry recognition of the fact that a capable country comes as much from the skills of the technicians, paraprofessionals and the broader work force, as it does from our university graduates.⁴

This cultural shift is important so that TAFE is seen in the future as different from universities but offering equally valuable and worthwhile learning programs. This is recognised in most EC countries where vocational education and training is regarded as a vital part of the education system. Australia seems to be slow in acknowledging this fact. As Sweet points out:

Australia has an education and training system that appears to place a relatively lesser value on the core of what TAFE does—producing applied middle level skills— than it does upon other forms of educational activity. In relative terms we undervalue the middle and bottom thirds of the educational pecking order.⁵

To date, Australia has educated the top 10 per cent of its population very well, at the expense of the others. It is time the emphasis changed and vocational education received the same recognition and support as schools and universities.

Underpinning all future developments is the need for adequate and secured funding. If TAFE is to provide quality and appropriate programs when and where they are needed, it has to be able to forward plan to ensure the resources such as facilities, staff and curricula are available. The major developments that have occurred within TAFE over the past 15 years would not have been possible without the provision of Commonwealth capital and recurrent funding. This will be even more important in the future as the demands for vocational education and training grow. The danger of an increased growth in short-term labour market programs and a tendering arrangement for future growth funds, as proposed by NBEET, is that the core provision will become fragmented and marginalised. It is hoped that not only will adequate levels of funding be provided but the tendency of the Commonwealth to over-regulate and provide short-term funding will be avoided.

In its efforts to reform Australia's vocational education and training system, the Commonwealth needs to recognise that although there are national economic imperatives, the national economy does not reside in Canberra. It is in fact the sum of the State economies

and each of these is different. TAFE's strength lies in the fact that over the past 100 years, it has been able to respond to the local labour market needs which then contribute to national economic development. This is the reason why the structure of TAFE differs from State to State. The danger is that if a national structure is imposed on TAFE, its ability to meet local needs will be weakened. It is hoped that the proposed national TAFE authority, when established, will recognise State differences and build on the existing strengths.

A disturbing feature of the events of the past five years, has been the change in terminology from technical and further education to either skills formation or just training. The economic rationalist and the industrial relations approach to education and training has led to a tendency for the Employment and Skills Formation Council and sections of DEET to think of TAFE as purely a trade-based (or to use the current terminology, entry-level training) provider, very similar to the views held by Peter Board in New South Wales in 1914. This overlooks the equally important need for the provision of highly trained technicians to upgrade Australia's labour market skills and the need for re-training of older workers who have been retrenched or who need skills upgrading as a result of technological change. A major outcome of the Kangan report and the CTEC era was the recognition of TAFE as a distinct sector and the development of a TAFE ethos.

During the 1980s and early 1990s, TAFE has also come under attack for not responding to the needs of industry. As Richard Sweet points out:

On both sides—accusers and defenders—the debate was generally conducted at the level of sniping and anecdote. Informed discussion and analysis were rare. This prevented many from realising that the heart of the problem was not so much TAFE itself as dissatisfaction with the Australian labour market with which it interacted. Without being aware of it, for more than a decade TAFE was at the heart of competing views about the Australian labour market.⁸

As a result of this view, the emphasis in recent times has been on making TAFE more competitive and on 'opening up the training market'. However, this is just playing at the margins, as the competition from private providers is mainly for short-term courses and not the more expensive courses which are the associate diploma, advanced technology and equity programs. The danger is that by responding to political imperatives and diverting funding to quick-fix short courses, expansion of the core of TAFE's activity which are the more broadbased courses, is at risk. Any reduction in this area would have long-term economic and labour market consequences and would lead, yet again, to Australia having to import skilled labour.

A major theme of the history of TAFE in Australia over the past two decades has been that of change. There has been constant growth, changes in the student profiles, significant structural change, continual change in programs and constant and rapid change in government policies and priorities.

At this stage it is not clear what effect the establishment of the Australian National Training Authority will have both on TAFE nationally and on individual TAFE systems. Based on history, it is hard to see that it would wish to try to impose a national structure on State and Territory TAFE systems and if it did, whether this could be done successfully. The fact that the main policy body will be the ministerial council, which will be comprised of the ministers from all States, Territories and the Commonwealth, would lead to the conclusion that although there will most certainly be further development of national TAFE systems and processes, it is unlikely there will be major national structural or organisational changes.

The next few years will be difficult ones for all sectors of education but for TAFE in particular. The events of the past five years have meant that TAFE will need to continue to fight to maintain its place as an identifiable sector of education. However, history has shown that TAFE in Australia has been a great survivor. Although TAFE is again under threat as an entity and faced with massive challenges in the years ahead, there is no doubt that it will again, as it has in the past, emerge from the

current uncertainties, a larger and stronger sector of tertiary education.

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